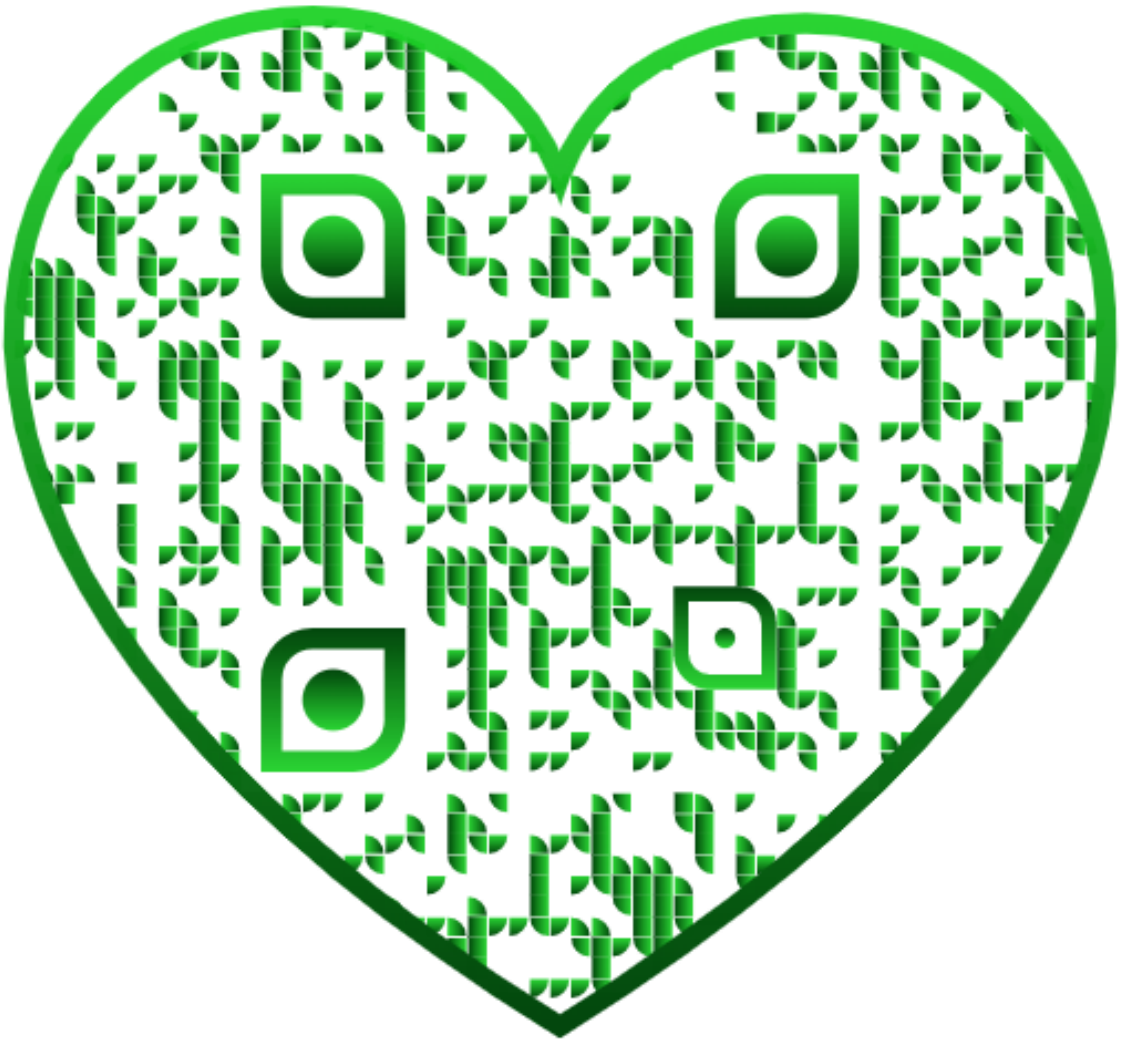
POWER OVER PORNOGRAPHY

The Proven Solution to Overcoming Pornography Addiction

By Brian Brandenburg



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The proven solution for overcoming pornography addiction

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Preface

10 years ago I attended family weekend at the conclusion of a 30-day intensive drug rehabilitation for a family member with a drug addiction. The out-of-state rehabilitation facility had an excellent reputation.

The purpose of family weekend was to help family and close friends learn how to help without enabling. I learned about drug and alcohol addiction, the signs and the treatments. I didn't realize how little I knew about how to help addicts until I attended the three-day weekend.

I could provide much more detail about the path that led to our family member's addiction, treatment, etc. but that is not the reason I'm sharing this experience with you. This is: On the first day of parents' weekend, one of the leaders of the program spoke to us. His eye patch, tattoos, unkempt hair and large stature were intimidating but when he spoke, he spoke with authenticity and sincerity.

He was an alcoholic who was 19 years sober. He said that his program and just a few like it throughout the country were recognized as the best drug and alcohol rehab facilities in the nation and in the world. He spoke proudly of their status as a 12-step program and how 12-step programs have been proven to be the only working way to manage addictions. He then said "Our recidivism rate is 80%." He paused, then added, "80% of those who attend our program will drink or use within one year."

He kept speaking but I didn't hear much of the rest of his talk. He talked a little about the attendees being equipped with the knowledge and tools to recover from future relapses but my focus was on the 80% failure rate. My immediate thought reactions were "One of the best rehabs in the country and the best they can do is 20% success?" And "This place costs tens of thousands of dollars and there's an 80% chance of failure?"

Despite my learning a great deal over the next few days, I couldn't get the "80% recidivism rate" out of my mind. I thought "There has to be a better way." From that thought sprung 10 years of search and research to find a better way. In the following pages, you'll read and experience the better way.

Several months after returning from family weekend, I was invited to attend a meeting of bishops (pastors) as a substitute for my bishop. He was out of town and asked me to attend and take notes for him. One of the discussions that took place during the meeting was about the difficulty members of the congregations had of overcoming the viewing of pornography. The bishops discussed various ways of helping, including prayer, scripture study, attendance at 12-step addiction recovery programs, etc. but didn't seem to have a solution for the inevitable series of relapses.

My research and searching for better ways led me to read many books and articles, most of which had a nugget or two of value but no solution to the problem of relapse, either with pornography or drugs/alcohol. I was discouraged but determined. My search was focused on results. I was open to a variety of treatment methods if they produced the right results.

In the meantime, I was asked to serve as bishop (pastor) of my congregation and in addition to other duties, began helping people overcome addictions. I discovered that pornography addiction was the most difficult for people to overcome and that it was the least researched and discussed with the fewest effective options for pastors to use to help.

My interest in a cure or at least better treatment program continued even stronger over the next several years. I discovered parts of programs that worked and implemented them right away but usually found holes in them. Continuing my on-the-job training and research over the past three years, I've developed a comprehensive treatment method and system that results in high success rates, much higher than what I've seen with other programs. I've just recently implemented follow-up methods included in this book that I hope will boost the success rate even higher.

I'll plan to continue to monitor success rates. For now, I take great satisfaction in seeing long-time addicts free of their pornography addiction and feeling happier and freer than they've felt in years; in seeing young married men free of the guilt, of the shame and of the suffering relationships that pornography brings. They thought marriage would solve their addiction but discovered that it didn't. I'm grateful to see adolescents and early 20-somethings get back on track with their relationships, their confidence and their performance at work and at school as a result of being porn-free.

I feel obligated to share this system with as many people as possible so that they can be free of pornography addiction and the terrible toll it takes on their lives and the lives of their loved ones. I hope you benefit by the method and system presented in the following pages. Once you're experiencing freedom from pornography addiction, please share your story so others may benefit at www.poweroverpornography.com.

Introduction

You are about to embark on a journey to freedom, freedom from pornography addiction and the awful consequences that the addiction brings. You'll discover true principles within the Power over Pornography System that take the power from pornography viewing and give it right back to you. I think you'll be surprised at how easy they are to implement.

Power over Pornography is not a 12-step program. We think highly of 12-step programs and believe they can be effectively used in conjunction with Power over Pornography. Power over Pornography is also not a self-discipline program. We believe that those pornography addiction recovery methods that rely upon self-discipline have lower chances of success. We believe that you'll experience a greater chance of success with this program that requires only the self-discipline to read and implement simple exercises but does not rely on increased self-discipline while dealing with the temptation to view pornography.

Power over Pornography is a step-by-step recovery program that walks you through the process of taking back your power over pornography and provides you with the simple but powerful steps to keep the power going forward. It is also just as effective at taking back your power over masturbation, which often accompanies pornography viewing but can also be an addiction by itself.

Power over Pornography is solution-focused, not problem-focused. We believe you want to know the way to overcome your pornography addiction and are less interested in knowing why you're addicted or how you became addicted. By following the steps outlined in this book, you'll have the solution. Leave the problem focus to those still willing to wallow in their addiction.

While focused on solutions, Power over Pornography is not for everyone. If you have deep psychological problems or issues or are involved in illegal activity, consult a therapist or a lawyer.

This book is written in story form relying upon an example of one person addicted to pornography going through the process of taking his power back with the help of an experienced and expert guide. We hope this facilitates your learning the steps used to overcome pornography viewing.

You'll also see homework assignments after most chapters. The homework is easy but important. It will solidify the concepts and steps and assist you in implementation. Please complete the homework for the best results.

You'll be surprised at the discoveries you make with each chapter and with each power you take back. You'll learn a brand new perspective that will have you asking, "Why didn't I think of that?"

Welcome to finally being able to overcome your pornography addiction. Now, let's get started…

Chapter 1: Is there hope for recovery from pornography addiction?

"Don't worry if you fail. 80% of 12-step participants don't succeed the first time." Jason was tired of failing. His church leader told him the 12-step program was the best recovery program for pornography addicts. "How could it be the best with such a high failure rate?" he thought. "Is there no way for me to overcome this addiction?"

Jason felt hopeless. At 37 years old with three children, he desperately wanted to overcome his pornography addiction but no matter what he tried, he kept sliding back into it. His wife recently confronted him about pornographic websites visited on the family computer. Jason suggested their 10-year old son, Mike, may have visited the websites and that he would talk to him. He was embarrassed and ashamed thinking of how he was covering up his addiction by blaming his son.

As an experienced computer user Jason also felt stupid for not deleting the website history after looking at pornographic websites. A long-term pornography addict, he was used to covering his tracks to avoid detection. He vowed to be more careful about concealing his habit while feeling shame that he was thinking about his carelessness instead of overcoming his addiction.

Just nine months ago, he completed the 12-step program without letting his wife know he was attending. The experienced 12-steppers advised him to tell his wife as part of his recovery but Jason was too afraid of her reaction. Would she leave him? Would she look down upon him as a failure? Would she ever want to be with him again?

So he did it without her knowledge and it worked! He was finally free of his addiction and was elated. He had felt gradually more love come back into his life. He smiled more. He felt like his relationship with his wife and even his children was improving. He felt more joy than he had felt in years.

He wasn't even sure how it happened but he had reverted back to his old habits after six months. Granted, six months was the longest he had refrained from viewing pornography. But, one moment of weakness late at night and he was back into the same pattern that made his life miserable for so long.

"Let's take a 10-minute break."

Jason admitted to himself that he didn't hear the last 30 minutes of the meeting. He tried 12-steps before and was disheartened to be back and disheartened to learn that he wasn't alone in returning to his pornography addiction. He was back at this 12-step meeting to begin again and was discouraged at the statistics on recidivism that the speaker mentioned. The hopelessness that was his friend for so many years had returned.

At the break, Jason stayed inside while over half the attendees walked outside during the break. Some of the others moved to the back of the room for a snack or some water. Jason didn't feel like interacting with anyone so stayed in his seat, wallowing in his hopelessness.

"Hi, I'm David." Jason looked up to see a large man with mostly blonde but graying hair. He appeared to be in his early 60's and had a kindness in his smile. Jason saw his outstretched hand and weakly raised his hand to meet it with a handshake. "I noticed you weren't joining the others outside or in the back so thought I would come over and say hi."

Jason perked up just a little to know that someone else in the room noticed him.

David continued. "I couldn't help but notice that you look a bit disappointed or discouraged. I haven't seen you here for a few months but I remember you, especially the last time you shared. I could tell you were changed as you described how happy you were when you described your 12-step journey then. I hate to jump to conclusions but you don't look the same. You fit the profile of someone who has relapsed."

Jason wasn't comfortable talking about his addiction and relapse for fear of his wife and family, friends or work colleagues finding out. He couldn't imagine the shame he would feel. But he had come to feel that the 12-step meetings were safe and confidences were kept. He confided more within the walls of these meetings to strangers than to anyone close to him.

He faintly recognized David from before. David made him feel OK about sharing his weaknesses. He also seemed genuinely interested and sincere. He had a warmth about him that made Jason instantly comfortable; Jason fleetingly thought about how first impressions of people tend to stay with us a long time. His first impression of David was positive and remained so after several months of not seeing him.

"I guess you could say that" Jason said. "I thought 12-steps was the answer and felt like I was never going to relapse into my old habits after I finished the program a few months ago. Now I hear that relapse is expected nearly 80% of the time. It's discouraging to think that there really isn't a way to rid myself of my addiction once and for all."

Jason found himself opening up and saying more that he thought he would. "I know I'm supposed to tell my wife and loved ones about my addiction and get their support but I just can't bring myself to do it. I'm afraid my wife will leave me. She's very religious—we both are--and I don't think she would stand for it." He felt a little embarrassed claiming he was religious.

"It's usually a good idea to tell your loved ones so they can support you but I understand your concern about her reaction." David seemed like he really understood and wasn't just repeating a familiar phrase.

"Without her knowing, I'm not sure I'll be able to continue coming to the meetings. But it's not just my fear of her reaction. I'm also deeply ashamed of my pornography viewing habit and humiliated that I'm not strong enough to overcome it."

"I just mentioned that it is usually best to tell your spouse but why don't you try continuing in the program without telling her? Then when you feel the time is right, you can begin talking about it with her."

"I would like to but I don't think she'll buy it. When I completed the program last fall, I told her it was a special continuing education requirement for work." Jason felt like this was half-true. His addiction was hurting his work performance. While others who started their careers at the same time he did were being promoted, he was in the same position for the last four years. He was used to good performance reviews but his last one was mediocre and he was fearful of potentially losing his job. He felt that his pornography habit was impacting his work performance.

"Becky wasn't happy about my missing family time in the evenings twice per week but understood because it was only for a few months. I don't think she would buy it again and I don't like the idea of deceiving her any more. I thought for a while that I was no longer in love with her but once I was free of my addiction, my love for her came back gradually but strongly. I don't want to hurt her by deceiving her or by telling her about my pornography addiction."

As soon as Jason said the words, he recognized that he was deceiving her every day that he looked at pornography but didn't say anything more. He was afraid he had already revealed too much about himself to David. He expected David to say, 'Well, it was nice to meet you Jason. Good luck with your wife" and to quickly move away.

David met Jason's eyes with his own and didn't say anything for a few seconds. Jason felt listened to and felt an understanding that he had not felt recently. Before beginning the 12-step program, Jason revealed his secret addiction to his church authority to confess and get help. He was not greeted with the level of understanding he expected.

Jason struggled for years before making an appointment to confess to the head of his congregation and to seek advice and help. When he finally mustered up the courage to meet, he expected understanding and help but was greeted with a rebuke. Jason felt the rebuke was done in love but not with understanding.

His church leader told him how the addiction would destroy his family and how he just needed to stop. He would receive heavenly help if he would sincerely pray and fast about it and would be able to overcome the addiction.

Jason had tried for years to call upon the powers of heaven to help him and felt that he had received that power from time to time, even months at a time refraining from looking at pornography. He had fasted, prayed deeply and sincerely but would still revert back to viewing pornography.

He followed his church leader's advice to install internet filters on his computer and to make sure the computer was in a central area so that everyone could walk by and see what was on the screen. This helped temporarily but when everyone else was asleep and some sites escaped the filters, the habit returned.

When he saw a 12-step addiction recovery program on the church website, Jason was intrigued. He heard about Alcoholics Anonymous and knew it was the genesis of 12-step programs. Although not knowing much about the details, he remembered that it had a long history and a good reputation at

helping people overcome addictions.

Jason recalled how difficult it was to decide to attend his first 12-step meeting. He denied for years that he was addicted to pornography, claiming to himself that he could stop if he really wanted to but he didn't really want to. It wasn't so bad if no one knew about it. Besides, Becky didn't want to have sex as often as he did so this provided an outlet for his more powerful sex drive. As he thought about these rationalizations now, he realized they were just excuses that prolonged his addiction with no hope of change.

When he finally realized that his excuses were not helping him and that he risked his marriage, career and family, he decided to try the 12-step sexual addiction program. Jason deliberately chose not to attend the program sponsored by his church but made sure he attended a program far from home and work. He didn't want to risk his family, friends or church associates finding out about it.

Jason loved the program. He felt that the program reflected a strong understanding of the power of addiction. He felt gratified to know that he was not the only one struggling against his addiction with little success. When he admitted he was powerless over his addiction, he felt hope that he could recover. That hope blossomed and Jason remained "sober" of his pornography addiction for six months.

He knew he was supposed to continue attending meetings to remain "porn-free" but felt he was healed of his addiction and couldn't spend any more time away from his wife, kids or the job. He would have to manage without meetings.

Jason realized he enjoyed life more during those six months than he had in years. He didn't fully realize the joy until he looked back over the six-month period. During the first few months, he faced numerous trials and thought that overcoming the addiction had not resulted in tremendous improvement in his life. But near the end of the six months, it became crystal clear. Not only did he feel greater love for his wife and kids, but he felt like he was performing better at work and felt like he was more in tune spiritually than he had been since before his teens. Life seemed good again. Hope returned.

As he reflected on the "addiction-free" time, he realized, at least a little, how damaging pornography was to his life and to his relationships and how much better his life was without it. Not only did he feel love returning to his life, the anger that he showed to his wife and kids went away, almost miraculously. He had not associated the anger with his pornography habit until he was able to see the difference in his life from being addicted to being "porn-free."

"I'm sorry about your relapse and discouragement" David whispered. I'm also a pornography addict. I've been sober for 22 years and may be able to help you."

Jason shifted his inward focus towards David. "I'm not sure there is help for me if I don't attend these meetings on a regular basis."

David responded gently, "I still receive strength from the 12-step meetings or I wouldn't be

here but I discovered some principles and practices to help myself that go beyond the 12-step addiction recovery program. They have helped me remain free of my pornography addiction for the past 22 years. If you feel like they may help you, I'm happy to share them with you."

Jason felt a little hope returning into his heart. He didn't know David very well at all but felt David's sincerity and believed David wanted to help him. The hope was momentary. Jason's inner skeptic blurted out, "How much does it cost?" He felt bad the minute he asked the question but didn't want to appear naïve and an easy mark. He also didn't want to spend money earmarked for his family on an expensive treatment program for himself.

David didn't blink, but met Jason's skepticism with a sincere, "It will only cost you some of your time. I'm willing to help you so that you can help someone else. I believe that one of the reasons we're addicted is to be able to empathize with others faced with this addiction, to truly understand their predicament and to help them out of their personal abyss.

"I believe you'll be able to help many others move from a life of addiction to a life of love and joy. One of my great satisfactions in life has been to see hard-core addicts become loving husbands and fathers, to see the hopeless begin to know of hope and love that they thought was lost from their lives and to see their work lives progress beyond their own ambitions."

Jason felt peace and warmth from David's statement and a little more hope returned to his heart. Before he could reply, he was interrupted from the front of the room. "Let's take our seats and get started." Jason briefly turned his head towards the facilitator. When he turned back David was moving toward his own seat. Jason almost rushed after him but remained seated for the rest of the meeting.

He couldn't remember much of what was said during the rest of the meeting but did recall the sense of a spirit of healing in the room. He kept thinking about his short conversation with David and the feelings of hope and peace that it brought to him. He determined that he would meet with David and learn of the principles and practices that gave David strength and power over an addiction that Jason thought was going to be with him forever.

Chapter 2: Am I addicted to Pornography?

As Jason drove home he felt a little hope returning, replacing the shame and hopelessness, and reflected a bit on what brought him to this point. He didn't know David that well but felt like he was the right person to come into his life at the right time. Maybe his prayers were finally being answered and this would be the way out of his porn addiction.

He smiled as he thought about David's gentle way, his lack of judging Jason's relapse and his sincerity in wanting to help. Jason had tried a couple of internet addiction recovery programs before 12-steps and had tried many other ways to overcome his pornography addiction but had not succeeded.

Jason continued thinking about his pornography viewing habit. He first viewed pornography as an 11-year old. Jason pictured the day 26 years ago when he was walking home after school. He saw a group of his friends stopped on the trail that went through the field on the way home. He caught up to them and asked what they were doing? "You gotta see this" was the reply from one of his friends. Jason looked and saw a magazine opened to a photo of a naked woman. He felt it was wrong but kept looking as one of them turned the pages to more photos of this woman and others.

That night he couldn't get the photos out of his mind and wanted to see them again.

Jason recently learned that the average age that young people are exposed to pornography is 11. He always thought he was one of the few that viewed pornography so young. Although he didn't get the chance to view pornography often during middle school, he acquired his own magazines in high school and then switched to the internet for viewing pornography.

He never thought he was addicted, just enjoying looking at pictures of naked ladies. As he thought back about his habits, sometimes he went weeks and months without viewing pornography, thinking he could stop when he wanted to. But he always went back to it.

He thought as he drove, "I was addicted shortly after I was 11 years old but didn't' realize it until last year. He felt foolish as this thought hit him. I've learned what it means to be addicted and I'm glad I'm finally doing something about it. I wish I would have done something about it many, many years ago. I thought the problem would go away as I got older or when I got married or when I had less stress in my life.

"Now I know that the problem doesn't get better on its own. I would have been better off, way better off, if I would have addressed it many years ago. I know it doesn't help to dwell on the past so I'll just be grateful I'm finally doing something about it. I've been stupid to live with pornography for so many years."

Jason was nearing his home but was still deep in thought about his addiction. "I've been trying to tell myself that I wasn't addicted, could go long stretches without viewing pornography and could quit when I wanted. I realize those were lies and I knew in my heart that they were always lies.

"Now I know that frequency, intensity, duration…none of them really matter in defining addiction for me. I know viewing pornography is bad, bad for me, bad for my family, bad for my work. I know for me that I'm addicted even if I view pornography only once per year.

"If I know I don't want to do it but I do it anyway, even infrequently, then I'm not living according to my own values and my own standards so I'm addicted. In essence, I'm doing something I really don't want to do. To me, that's the definition of addiction and I don't want it with me anymore."

Jason felt he was finally willing to tell the truth to himself about his pornography viewing and felt that it could only help as he tried David's principles and practices program. He started to smile as his thoughts turned from the past to the present. He smiled as he thought, "It's about time. I think this is going to help so I'm going to try it." He pulled in the driveway.

Chapter 3: The Power of Commitment

"Jason, I need that reconciliation by the end of the day." Jason, an accountant, wasn't used to having deadlines reiterated but had missed a few deadlines during the past few weeks so understood why his boss, Bruce, was now focused on the deadline.

Jason had not linked his work performance to his pornography addiction until he had been free of the addiction for six months and then gone back to it. He now saw clearly that his work performance improved while he was free of pornography and slid when he wasn't.

He wasn't sure if it was an absolute cause and effect connection or if his late nights looking at pornography led to sleep deprivation, which then led to poor performance. He also considered the possibility that while he was looking at pornography his colleagues were focusing on improving their work-related knowledge or simply doing more work.

One other thought occurred to him. He knew his self-confidence was markedly higher and his step was lighter when he was temporarily not viewing pornography. He now recognized that his confidence had dropped when he was not "porn-free" and tied it directly to viewing pornography. He also knew that a person's confidence is reflected in everything they do and in every interaction they have with others. "So," he thought, "my pornography viewing had to be impacting my performance and my own and others' perception of my leadership abilities."

In addition, Jason realized that the pornography addiction resulted in feeling shame. Shame because he resolved every day to stop but still viewed pornography. Shame that he was violating his marriage vows with his wife and shame that he was spending his time viewing pornography instead of taking care of his family. The shame he felt had to be impacting his job performance. But regardless of the reasons and the results, Jason was convinced that pornography was hurting his performance on the job.

"I'm right on schedule and should have it to you by 4:30." Jason wanted to beat the deadline for two reasons: to show Bruce that he still "had it" and to make sure he wasn't late for his first meeting with David. He was curious about the principles and practices that could finally provide a way out of his addiction.

He was hopeful but still a little skeptical, worrying that the program may be an extension of self-improvement programs that focus on increasing one's self-discipline. He felt hopeless at improving his self-discipline and tended to greet self-improvement programs with skepticism. "They work best for the person charging money to teach them" he thought.

At 4:25, Jason handed the completed reconciliation to Bruce. Bruce acted a bit surprised when he reached out to take it. He smiled at Jason, and then turned his head towards his computer. Jason knew he was interrupting Bruce's work so didn't linger but felt satisfied with Bruce's smile. As Jason turned to leave, he felt a little lighter in his steps and smiled himself as he exited the office.

Jason pulled his car to the address David had given him. The house was a beautiful, simply

landscaped, colonial in a nice neighborhood about 11 miles from Jason's house. Jason felt a twinge of guilt over coming to David's house.

When David suggested they meet at a restaurant not far from Jason's work, Jason said he was still quite worried about others finding out about his addiction and preferred to meet in a more private setting. David quickly volunteered his own home to meet.

"I have a private office in my home where we can discuss the principles and practices that helped me and may help you. I want you to be able to focus on learning, not on wondering who may be watching."

Jason feigned objection at meeting in David's home but quickly accepted when David insisted. He was happy to be meeting in a place where his addiction was not likely to be discovered by others.

Before Jason rang the doorbell, David opened the door, greeting Jason with a warm handshake. "Welcome Jason. I hope you didn't have any problem finding my home."

"No, your directions were great. Thanks again for agreeing to us meeting here. I hope it's not hard on you or on your family."

"Not at all. I'm glad we can meet in my home. We have a little more control over the environment here but I'll apologize in advance that we may be interrupted from time to time." David motioned towards the hallway, "When you're home, you're fair game for family interruptions."

David motioned for Jason to come in and waved his hand toward the door on the right, leading from the two-story foyer. Jason felt a peaceful spirit in David's house. Somehow he knew that he would feel this spirit in David's house before he came. It reflected the peace he felt when he first talked with David at the 12-step meeting. As he entered David's office, the peaceful feeling stayed with him.

"Please sit down. I know you're pressed for time to get to your family tonight so let's dive right into action.

"I have a white board in the office so we can record some of the most important concepts. If you're like me, concepts stay with you more when they enter the eye, not just the ear. In fact, the more senses we use in learning, the more we'll retain and the more the learning will become a part of us."

"Jason, are you familiar with the concept of different learning styles?"

"I'm not sure what you mean."

"Some people learn better by reading, while some people learn better by listening, others learn better by watching, still others learn by participating and some people need a combination of all methods. Does that sound familiar?"

"Oh, yeah. I've learned that both in school and on the job. I tend to be a reader but am okay at absorbing knowledge other ways as well."

"Great, then using a combination won't hurt your learning and should help you remember and apply the key concepts better."

"Thanks. I prefer learning in different ways. It keeps me from getting bored."

David chuckled, "I hope you'll not get too bored with what you're going to learn. In a few moments, you'll be learning the keys to gaining power over pornography in ways that you've never thought of. The concepts will ring true but their application will be new to you.

"You'll be able to overcome the addiction without having to deny yourself or feel deprived."

Jason interrupted, "You mean by learning self-discipline to deny myself, the addiction will be overcome?" Jason couldn't hold back his skepticism regarding self-improvement/self-discipline courses and his fear that this one would be the same.

Jason was used to facing annoyed looks when he expressed his skepticism but David seemed to take it in stride and the warmth in his eyes and on his face stayed. "We're jumping ahead of ourselves but this is not a course in improving your self-discipline. The only discipline you'll need is to follow the program. You'll understand this better as we move along."

Jason couldn't grasp how he could possibly overcome his pornography viewing without exercising self-discipline, self-discipline that he felt was in short supply, but he was beginning to trust David to help him understand as they explored the lessons.

David turned to the white board and wrote "Priority/Commitment."

The Power of Clarity

"Jason, you seem very motivated to rid yourself of your pornography addiction. But it's important that we determine if it's a major priority in your life right now and if you're willing to commit to follow *all* the steps required to overcome your addiction."

Jason noticed David strongly emphasizing the word "all" when he spoke.

"Some people experience some early success and quit before completing all the training and learning all the concepts. Others let the seeming urgent priorities of life overtake the important priority of this learning and stop before they're finished. Some just have a strong habit of not finishing what they start. Those who, for whatever reason, don't finish their learning and training are the ones who slip back into pornography addiction after a few weeks or months.

"I'm willing to spend my time teaching and training you but want to make sure the timing is right

for you and that you will be able to finish the training and make it a priority before we begin. If you think you won't be able to finish, then we will postpone starting the training until you are in a better position and can finish the entire course during the six weeks duration. It's important to your success that you come to the individual sessions according to the schedule.

"The schedule provides for sufficient time between sessions to absorb and apply the specific concepts and exercises of that session but does not allow too much time to elapse. If too much time passes between sessions, the synergy and connectedness of the concepts are lost and some of the power drains out of the learning."

Jason felt like his commitment was being challenged but wasn't sure how to respond. He didn't know anything about the training and the time commitment involved. He trusted David to a point but didn't really know him that well, so wasn't sure he was committed to the training. He just wanted to try it. Then he could judge whether it was worth committing to.

David, sensing Jason's wariness, interrupted himself, "I know you aren't familiar with the program yet and you don't even know me that well but let me outline the training commitment and touch on its potential impact so we can see if it's something you want to commit to."

Jason breathed a sigh of relief and vowed to do a better job of hiding his thoughts and feelings from his facial expressions.

Turning to the board, David wrote: "12 sessions of 30-40 minutes each plus outside homework of 10-30 minutes per session." Underneath this statement he wrote: "Six weeks."

Priority/Commitment

- **12 sessions of 30-40 minutes each**
- **Outside homework of 10-30 minutes per session**
- **Six Weeks**

"I've found from teaching others that the ideal time frame for the training is six weeks. Twelve sessions break down nicely into two times per week for six weeks but that isn't the ideal spacing. Early on, we will meet three times per week and near the end of the training we will meet once per week.

It's important before you start the training that you commit to finish it. If you can't commit to finish it, we should postpone starting until you can."

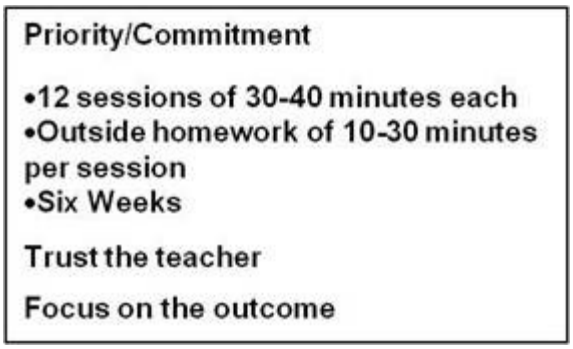
Jason was ready to commit even though he didn't know much about the program. He felt good about David and figured that committing 10-13 total hours over six weeks for a chance to overcome a multi-decade-long addiction was worth the commitment despite some remaining skepticism.

He thought about the Stephen Covey leadership seminar he attended over seven years ago and

how one concept kept nagging him. The Covey facilitator asked, "What one thing in your life, if you changed it, would make the biggest difference?" Jason knew right when the question was asked that the one thing was his pornography addiction yet he still had it with him seven years later.

If he couldn't commit now to 12 hours over a mere six weeks, then he probably could never commit. Jason thought, "This truly should be, no, not should be, this ***is*** the most important priority because it will make the biggest difference in my life."

David didn't let him commit yet. "Before you commit to this, let's go over a few ground rules and reasons." He wrote on the board: "Trust the teacher" and "Focus on the Outcome."



"Although we just met recently, I sense a connection and trust between us. I'm going to ask you to extend that trust a little further to me. I would like you to open your mind to the training, in essence to accept that I know what I'm doing as your teacher and your guide through the program and that you will greet the sessions with an open mind and will.

"The reason I emphasize this is that I tend to be a bit cynical about new approaches, especially if they hold out the promise that I can accomplish something I'm not sure I believe. I tend to not open my mind to the new approach but instead try to poke holes in it and find reasons why it won't work. I listen for holes instead of listening to learn.

"You may not be as cynical as I am but, just in case, I'm asking you to not take the cynical approach. In fact, if you find yourself becoming cynical, I'm asking you to just drop your cynicism momentarily when you feel it and commit yourself to listening, learning and applying the training with an open mind. You'll find out soon enough if it works and fits you. If you hang on to your cynical self, you may not experience it enough to let it work for you."

Jason recognized himself in David's words about cynicism. Even though he understood and agreed with David about how cynicism can block learning, he hesitated, worried that the training may be something weird, like hypnosis or one of those primal therapy sessions where you yell. He saw a news special on the yelling and thought it was ridiculous.

David continued, reacting to Jason's hesitation. "Don't worry. It's not a fringe program. As you participate in it, you'll find it to be normal learning with run-of-the-mill teaching styles. You may even find it boring but I don't think you will.

Jason thought, "Either he can read minds or I'm wearing my thoughts and emotions on my face too strongly…probably a combination of both: he is such a good listener that he sees and senses my emotions plus I'm not very good at hiding my emotions from my face and body language."

"Now, let's turn to the second phrase, 'Focus on the Outcome' and discuss why this should be a priority and major commitment for you. Much of the early part of the training will be focused on consequences and outcomes but I would like you to explore your thoughts on outcomes. If you don't believe the outcome is worth the effort, then your commitment will not be sufficient to finish the program."

"People with addictions make up many reasons why the outcome of holding on to their addiction is not all that bad. Their rationalizations make it difficult for them to finish a program. Basically, if you don't believe the outcome is worth it, you may not have the gumption to stick with the program."

Jason interrupted. His commitment had started to build as David spoke. "I'm very motivated. This addiction has been with me since I was a teenager and it's slowly destroying my life and the lives of my family. Although, like you, I tend to approach things skeptically, I'll try to drop my guard for six weeks to see if I can benefit. If it can work in helping me overcome my addiction, I sense that it will help my entire life. I can't think of a higher priority right now even though I'm busy at work and at home.

"I've been through all the rationalizations before about how pornography is not that bad, how everyone seems to be doing it, how it doesn't impact my life and I recognize that those really are lies. I'm sad that it's taken me such a long time to realize that they are lies and that pornography has been destroying my life but six months of being porn-free helped me realize what I was missing. Pornography addiction is putting distance between me and my wife and kids, the most important people in my life. I may lose them if I don't overcome it."

Jason paused and noticed that his voice was raised. Before he could continue, David spoke with an understated smile. "I think you're sufficiently motivated and committed. You've raised just a few outcome focuses, and we'll get into more of them within the training, but I think they're sufficient to cement your commitment."

"So let's make it official," David said as he handed a Jason a blank piece of paper. Commitments are cemented and made easier to fulfill when they are written and signed as well as verbalized. I'll ask you a few questions. Will you be willing to write the questions and write your answers on the page?"

Note: *If you're reading this book to rid yourself of your own addiction, it is important for you to complete the same exercises as Jason. Please refer to* www.poweroverpornography.com/commitment *for a pre-printed "Commitment Letter" with the list of questions and a place for your commitment signature.*

“Sure. I think you’re right about the commitment.” Ask away and I’ll write and sign.”

“Jason, are you willing to finish this program as I’ve outlined it for you as long as you don’t have any serious philosophical or religious differences with it?”

“Yes.”

“Are you willing to trust the teacher?”

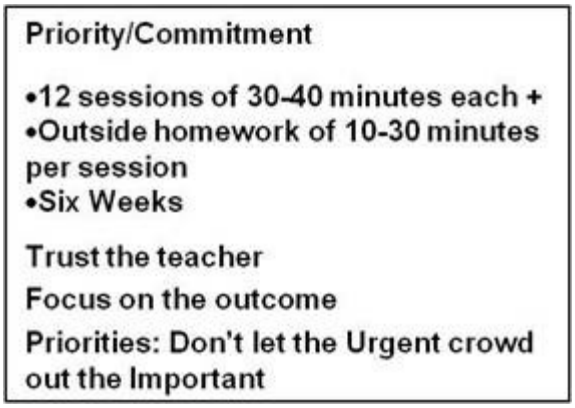
“Yes.”

Are you willing to focus on the outcome?”

“Yes,” Jason stated as he clicked the pen to sign the document.

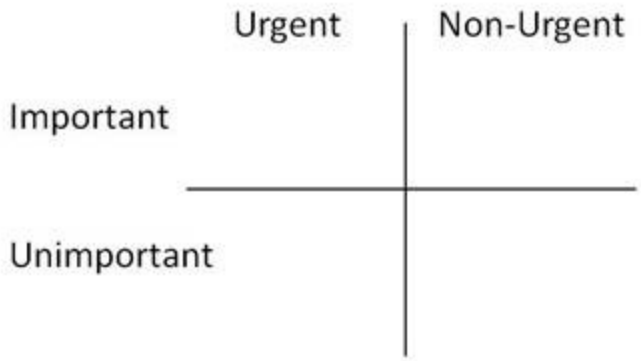
David interrupted, “Wait, before you sign, we have one other concept and question to cover.”

David turned to the board again and wrote as a third point with “Trust the Teacher” and “Focus on the Outcome,” “Priorities: Don’t let the urgent crowd out the important.”


Priority/Commitment
•12 sessions of 30-40 minutes each +
•Outside homework of 10-30 minutes per session
•Six Weeks
Trust the teacher
Focus on the outcome
Priorities: Don't let the Urgent crowd out the Important

“I think your trust and outcome focus will last and allow you to finish the training but I know you have a number of pressing demands on your time.”

Jason recognized the use of the words urgent and important from Stephen Covey’s time management matrix. As he recalled, the matrix consisted of four quadrants, (1) unimportant and non-urgent, (2) unimportant and urgent, (3) important and urgent and (4) important and non-urgent. He knew that effective time management involved getting rid of unimportant and non-urgent tasks and shifting more of his focus from the urgent and unimportant to the non-urgent and important quadrant.



He hadn't always used the matrix in guiding his own time management decisions but believed it was easy to let the important but non-urgent priorities in life take a backseat to urgent but less important priorities. To really make progress on life goals, committing to deliberately switch focus was vital.

David continued, "All the accountants I know have a lot of work, are under a strong deadline focus and have to put in long hours around tax due dates. Is that at all true with your job?"

"Exactly my job."

"You have a wife and children who are involved in community, church, school and other activities. My guess is that you would like to spend more time with them."

"Mike just started soccer this year and I'm the assistant coach. The season starts soon. I think it will be a blast but will take up some time for practice during the week and for games on Saturdays. My wife is taking time out from her career to raise our children as a stay-at-home mom but she volunteers a lot with church and the kids' school. She also asks me to help directly or with the kids. It's important to her so I like to help out as much as I can." Jason felt a twinge of guilt; he had not helped her much lately and her requests for help had decreased. Maybe she was giving up a little on his help.

"You lead a busy life." David sympathized. "Well I won't even get into the other demands on your time with your own hobbies and activities, not to mention your volunteer work. You have enough on your plate to have to juggle priorities without the addition of one more. How are you going to make this training a priority with all the other conflicting priorities?"

Jason didn't hesitate. He had asked himself this question several times before he drove over to David's house today. "I typically work late two nights per week in order to get all my work done on time. To make this a priority without jeopardizing my job or work performance I plan to get to the office 30 minutes early 2-3 times per week and work through lunch many days so that I can spend the hours we've allocated in the late afternoons and evenings focused on this training instead of working. I don't plan on letting anything interfere with this priority. I sense that if it works, it can change my life more than any other thing I can do."

Dave smiled. "It's funny how easy it is for us to cruise along with life, knowing that we have

higher priorities but not really ever getting to them because we don't make time for them or are unwilling to drop less important tasks. I'm glad you've thought about this as a priority in your life compared to the other demands on your time.

"I think you've stated the priority correctly. This program can change your life more than any other priority. In fact, it has the potential to help you realize goals in the other priority areas of your life, namely family relationships and career progress.

"Another way of looking at it is, 'I'm not sure this is going to work for me but it's worked for others so I'm going to commit the 12 hours or so of initial time commitment to see if it works for me.' 12 hours is a small commitment when you think about the potential outcome."

Jason nodded in agreement as David switched gears, "I think you're motivated and have met the three necessary commitment precursors to start the program: **you trust the teacher**, at least so far." David smiled. "Y**ou are focused on the outcomes** and **you're willing to forego urgent but less important priorities to make this a main priority**."

"So let's make it official," David said as he motioned towards the paper in Jason's hand. Commitments are cemented and made easier to fulfill when they are written. Let's start with the questions again. Will you continue writing the questions and your answers on the page?"

"Let's do it."

"Jason, are you willing to finish this program as I've outlined it for you as long as you don't have any serious philosophical or religious differences with it?"

"Yes."

"Are you willing to trust the teacher?"

"Yes."

Are you willing to focus on the outcome?"

"Yes."

Are you willing to forego urgent but less important activities to make this a priority?"

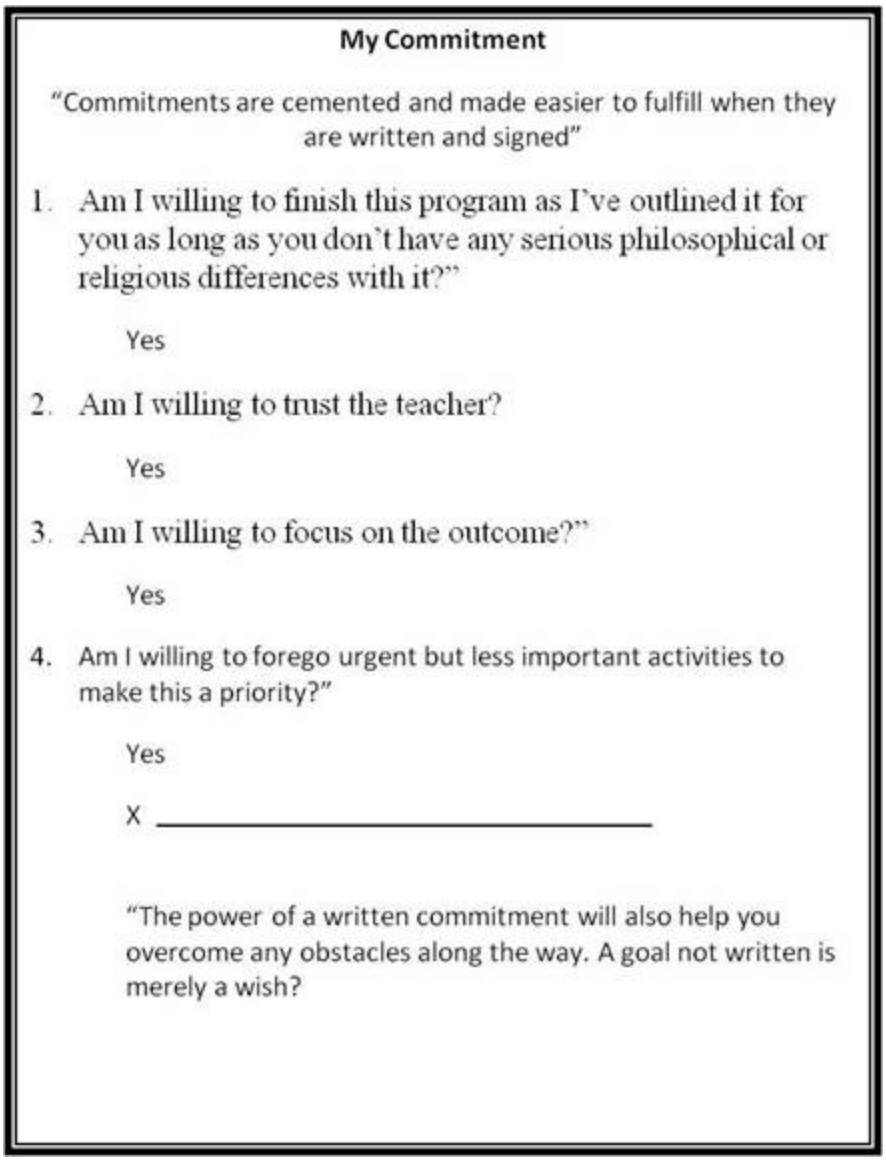
"Yes," Jason stated as he signed the document.

"Great. I think making your commitment both verbally and in writing will help you finish the program and overcome your addiction. It will also help you feel accountable for finishing it. I want to make sure you have all the ingredients you need to succeed so I'm glad we're off to a good start."

"I think the power of a written commitment will also help you overcome any obstacles along

the way. Have you heard the saying, “A goal not written is merely a wish?”

Before Jason could answer, David stated, “Well you’ve just turned a wish into a commitment. That will give you power to achieve the goal at a rate that is many times that of an unwritten commitment or goal.



My Commitment

"Commitments are cemented and made easier to fulfill when they are written and signed"

1. Am I willing to finish this program as I've outlined it for you as long as you don't have any serious philosophical or religious differences with it?"

   Yes

2. Am I willing to trust the teacher?

   Yes

3. Am I willing to focus on the outcome?"

   Yes

4. Am I willing to forego urgent but less important activities to make this a priority?"

   Yes

   X _____

"The power of a written commitment will also help you overcome any obstacles along the way. A goal not written is merely a wish?

"Before we dive in, I would like your permission to change our vocabulary a little.

"I will be referring to a pornography addict as a "**viewer**" throughout the training. Pornography is a big long word with extremely negative connotations. The act of looking at pornography or engaging in active pornography addiction itself we will refer to as "**viewing**."

"The act of masturbation, which accompanies pornography viewing in the majority of viewing episodes but can also be a separate addiction, we'll call "**doing**." The masturbation addict will be referred to as a "**doer**." Largely for the same reasons listed above.

"Does that make sense to you?"

Jason nodded in agreement, "I like the change."

David continued, "We'll also include some positive references to living a life free of pornography or viewing and free of masturbation or doing. We'll refer to this as '**living a loving life**' or as '**living a life of love**.' You'll learn shortly that the overcoming of viewing and doing will lead to

a huge increase in your capacity to love and in the happiness you derive from it. We'll also turn this ambiguous concept of love into something much more concrete in a later session.

"Although these concepts are focused on overcoming pornography and masturbation habits and addictions, viewing and doing, they can also be used for other sexual addictions, such as sexual relationships outside of marriage, visits to strip clubs and similar places, casual sex with partners with no emotional connection, interactions with prostitutes, homosexual encounters and other sexual addictions.

"I've found in helping both men and women overcome their pornography addiction that some of them have these other related addictions. This program always helps them but I also encourage them to get professional counseling. If you have any related addictions, I encourage you to get professional help as well."

David paused, waiting for Jason's reaction. Jason had been tempted to move beyond his pornography addiction to sex outside of marriage but had not done it. 'I think I've been lucky not to have ventured beyond pornography' Jason thought. "I don't have any additional sexual addictions… yet so I think we're good to go" Jason stated.

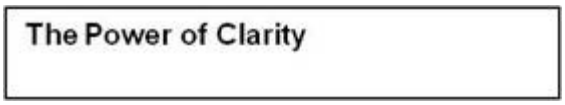
"Then we won't focus on the other items because you've confided to me that your focus is pornography, correct?"

"Yes, that's correct." David was casual in his mentions of other sex addictions but just hearing them made Jason nervous. Jason felt his face blush just talking about them.

"Are you ready to get started? This first session is one of our longest because we add the power of commitment to our next session, the power of clarity."

Chapter 4: The Power of Clarity

David turned to the white board again and wrote 'The Power of Clarity, then stated "The first step in overcoming your pornography addiction is to clarify the consequences of viewing pornography."



Jason looked quizzically at David, wondering out loud, "I'm not sure I get why this is an important step. Aren't the consequences obvious?"

David, in his usual gentle manner responded, "Sometimes we may think that the consequences are obvious and don't need to be researched and concretely stated but this is a vital step in overcoming your addiction. I think the "why" will become clear to you in a moment with a simple illustration.

"Let me outline the steps in clarifying consequences and then we can get into why it's so powerful.

"Here is what I would like you to do:

1. Research pornography's negative impact on your life and list all of the consequences you discover.
2. Then write down the five negative consequences that you most want to leave behind.
3. Once you've completed the negative consequences research, research the positive impacts that overcoming pornography will have on you and list them.
4. Then write down the five positive consequences you most desire."

David turned to the board and wrote "Realizing the Power of Clarity: Clear Consequences." Underneath that statement he wrote "5 biggest negative consequences" and underneath that he wrote "5 biggest positive consequences."

The Power of Clarity
• Realizing the Power of Clarity: Clear Consequences
• 5 biggest negative consequences
• 5 biggest positive consequences

"You will probably come up with a much larger list than five each, but I would like you to pare each list down to only five. Why five? In a past leadership role in business, I learned that most people can maintain focus on no more than five items at a time. If our business plan moved beyond five key priorities, we typically accomplished less than when we limited our focus to five.

"The exercise of limiting our plan to the five highest priorities also helped us select the five that mattered most and would have the greatest impact on our company. I'm still a believer that narrowing your focus to five key goals will result in greater accomplishment than focusing on more than five.

"In fact, I believe that "focusing on more than five" is a paradox. You can't effectively focus on more than five items at a time. I'm a firm believer that you get what you focus on and that trying to focus on more than five priorities at a time means you aren't focused at all.

"I didn't mean to get into so much detail about the "Rule of 5" but hopefully it's helpful to you in this context as well as in other parts of your life. Let's move on.

"How do you research the negative impacts of pornography? I have some ideas but I'm interested in your thoughts Jason."

Jason pondered the question briefly before responding, "I think much of my research can come from personal experience. I can think of many consequences that I've suffered as a result.'

David wasn't satisfied with his response. "What else?" he asked. "In order for you to clear up the cloudiness of the consequences, I think you'll need to uncover some outside research and statements."

Before Jason could respond, David interrupted, "I'm sorry Jason. I'm moving ahead too fast and using words that describe concepts we haven't covered yet."

"I just mentioned clearing up the cloudiness of consequences without explanation. If you'll permit me to provide a quick story, I think I can provide context that will help illustrate my point and answer why this step is so important.

"Several years ago, I heard a leader in my church speak to 200 or so youth, ages 12 through 18. He was tasked with motivating them to make good moral decisions during what can be a critical time in their lives as they're faced with competing moral decision points multiple times each day.

"I believe that many of our youth and way too many adults choose short-term gratification with less regard to the long-term consequences of their behavior. One of the universal keys to happiness is deferring short-term gratification in favor of long-term goals.

"A simple example for youth is doing homework instead of playing a video game. When a teenager chooses to do his homework, despite the desire to play a video game, he chooses excelling in school and gaining knowledge, which leads to graduating from high school, which leads to going to and graduating from college, which leads to a better job, which leads to…well, you get my point.

"I believe that the choice to defer short-term gratification is made easier when the consequences of both the short-term action and the inverse long-term action are clearly delineated and

stated, in other words, clarified.

"The speaker made this point beautifully with the youth. He used a stick of wood as a symbol of action and consequences. Whenever we choose an action, we choose the consequences of that action whether we want to or not. He bought a one-inch diameter, four-foot long dowel at the hardware store and cut it in half.

"He wrote "Action" at one end of each dowel and "Consequences" on the other end. He painted one of the dowels lightly in gold. He then rewrote the word "Action" so it was clearly visible but left the word "Consequences" barely visible under the gold paint.

"Before showing the "sticks" to the youth, he told them how much he enjoyed the "Indiana Jones" series of movies that began in the 1980's starring Harrison Ford as Indiana Jones. He described a scene from one of the movies:

"Indiana Jones, the hero, and his enemies were in a room filled with cups of many varieties, some jeweled and ornate and others somewhat more plain. They had succeeded in their search for the "holy grail" but were not sure which cup was the real grail and which cups were imposters. A knight was guarding the cups. If one drinks from one of the cups, the "holy grail," he will inherit a dose of healing and immortality. If one drinks from any one of the other cups, he will die.

"As one of Indiana Jones' enemies approaches the cups, the knight instructs him to 'Choose wisely.' He chooses a large, fancy, ornate cup and drinks. He dies. The knight points out that 'He chose unwisely.'

"Indiana Jones' father had been shot by his enemies and is dying in the next room. Indiana wants to choose the cup for his father so his father can drink from it and be healed. Indiana chooses a cup for his father. Indiana drinks from the cup to make sure it's not going to kill his father.

"He ended the description of the movie scene at that point and held up the two sticks. He asked the youth to choose one of the sticks but to 'Choose wisely.' He asked 'Who would choose the gold-painted stick?' About 25% the audience raised their hands. He then asked who would choose the plain stick and the other 75% of hands were raised.

"He pointed out that they must have remembered the movie scene. Indiana Jones had picked a plain, wooden cup and was successful in choosing wisely. His father drank from the cup and was healed.

"He explained to them that the gold-painted stick, although better looking, was the "Stupid Stick." He explained that whenever we choose to take an action, we are choosing the consequences of that action, whether they are clear to us or not. When we pick up the action end of the stick, we pick up the consequences end of the stick at the same time, whether we mean to or not. We can't pick up the action end of the stick without the consequences being attached to it.

"He then reviewed several moral decisions the youth would face and tried to clearly lay out the

short-term and long-term consequences of their positive and negative choices. We all 'get hit with the stupid stick,' but are especially vulnerable in our youth so it's important to make sure they know clearly the consequences of actions they may take.

"Sometimes, we 'get hit with the stupid stick,' meaning that the consequences appear clouded (painted over) or we are caught up in the moment so that we forget the consequences or we simply ignore them when we take the action. In other words, at the moment of choice, the consequences can be cloudy. But the consequences are still there and we still suffer them when we take the action.

"By deliberately clarifying the consequences before taking action, we increase our chances of choosing wisely.

"One of the keys to making moral decisions is ridding ourselves of the stupid stick, or in other words making sure we clarify and are well aware of the consequences of our actions. This is also one of the keys to overcoming a viewing/doing addiction.

"I hope when you think of acting without regard to the consequences or without feeling how painful the consequences may be that you'll consider yourself "hit by the stupid stick." That realization can help you clarify the consequences and make decisions based upon those consequences.

"I like the picture that the stupid stick paints in my mind with painted over or cloudy-looking but very real consequences. But the actual concept is grounded in solid brain science. Without getting into a lot of brain science detail, we have separate parts of our brain with different functions and processing methods.

"One part of our brain is the logical brain that considers consequences, both long and short-term, as it reasons and tries to reach a logical decision. Another part of our brain, sometimes referred to as the reptilian brain, responds to stimulus without thinking. The response is based upon natural instinct or, more often, how we've trained that part of our brain to react to stimulus without thought.

"We'll get into more about training our brain and just for fun we may continue to refer to it as clarifying cloudy consequences and trading the stupid stick for the "clear-consequence stick."

"Now that you have some context about the importance of removing any 'cloudiness' or 'paint' from consequences, let's get back to the question of research. What other sources can you use to list the consequences of viewing pornography?"

Jason was still smiling from the picture in his mind of the "stupid stick" and how he made decisions in the past without thinking through the long-term consequences. The idea of clarifying the consequences of viewing pornography seemed a little more important now.

"I know that university-level research has been performed on the effects of pornography and that many religious organizations have published research as well. This should be easy to track down with the internet."

"Many moral leaders of my religion and of many other religions of the world have spoken about the consequences from pornography use that they've seen in helping people overcome addiction."

David responded, "I think you're on the right track. I've also seen first-hand in the people I've guided through this program the consequences of pornography addiction and the consequences of living a loving life. Remember, living a loving life' is how we describe living a life without pornography addiction."

Jason asked, "Will you share your list of consequences with me? It would make it a lot easier for me to narrow the list to my five negatives and five positives if I have a starting point."

David smiled, "I'll be happy to provide you my list but my list won't have as much meaning to you as your own list. You and I can read the same research and draw out completely different lists of consequences based upon what rings true to us according to our experiences.

"The list also takes on deeper meaning to the list-maker due to their knowledge of the context. You'll list one point of the research you're reading but you'll remember the context of that point and so it will have deeper meaning to you. Does that make sense?"

Jason agreed with David's point and reluctantly gave up his request for a shortcut. "I think so. I'm familiar with the concept that the teacher learns much more than the student because of their having to prepare sufficiently to not only learn the material but to teach it. I view this the same way. I'm learning the material to focus it into a list. The learning process will give added meaning to my eventual list."

"I think you're ready to do your homework. Let's review the calendar. It's important that we schedule the next five meetings within two weeks. The concepts build upon each other and spacing them too far apart will mean re-learning and forgetting some of the key building blocks."

David and Jason scheduled out not only the next six meetings but the remaining meetings as well. They both committed to keeping the schedule, an important part of the training.

Homework for the Power of Clarity:

1. **Re-read written commitment and re-commit to starting and finishing the program. Commitment leads to success.**
2. **Research the negative and positive consequences of viewing pornography.**
3. **Narrow the list of consequences to the top five negative and the top five positive. Write them.**
4. **Schedule all of the remaining trainings on your calendar (see example):**
    a. **Week 1: 3 sessions - one every other day**
    b. **Week 2: 3 sessions – one every other day**
    c. **Week 3: 2 sessions equally spaced**
    d. **Week 4: 2 sessions equally spaced**

e. **Week 5: 2 sessions**
f. **Week 6: 2 sessions**

Month:						
Sunday	**Monday**	**Tuesday**	**Wednesday**	**Thursday**	**Friday**	**Saturday**
Week 1: (P.O.P. is the abbreviation for Power Over Pornography)	P.O.P. Session 1: 30 mins. + 30 mins. homework		P.O.P. Session 2: 30 mins. + 30 mins. homework		P.O.P. Session 3: 30 mins. + 30 mins. homework	
Week 2:	P.O.P. Session 4: 30 mins. + 30 mins. homework		P.O.P. Session 5: 30 mins. + 30 mins. homework			P.O.P. Session 6: 30 mins. + 30 mins. homework
Week 3:		P.O.P. Session 7: 30 mins. + 30 mins. homework		P.O.P. Session 8: 30 mins. + 30 mins. homework		
Week 4:	P.O.P. Session 9: 30 mins. + 30 mins. homework				P.O.P. Session 10: 30 mins. + 30 mins. homework	
Week 5:			P.O.P. Session 11: 30 mins. + 30 mins. homework			P.O.P. Session 12: 30 mins. + 30 mins. homework
Week 6:		P.O.P. Session 13: 30 mins. + 30 mins. homework			P.O.P. Session 14: 30 mins. + 30 mins. homework	

If you're unable to see the graphic calendar, here is an example calendar in text form:

Week 1: (P.O.P. is the abbreviation for Power Over Pornography)
Monday: P.O.P. Session 1 (30 mins.) plus Homework (30 mins.)
Wednesday P.O.P. Session 2 (30 mins.) plus Homework (30 mins.)
Friday: P.O.P. Session 3 (30 mins.) plus Homework (30 mins.)
Week 2:

Monday: P.O.P. Session 4 (30 mins.) plus Homework (30 mins.)
Wednesday: P.O.P. Session 5 (30 mins.) plus Homework (30 mins.)
Saturday: P.O.P. Session 6 (30 mins.) plus Homework (30 mins.)

Week 3:

Tuesday: P.O.P. Session 7 (30 mins.) plus Homework (30 mins.)
Thursday: P.O.P. Session 8 (30 mins.) plus Homework (30 mins.)

Week 4:

Monday: P.O.P. Session 9 (30 mins.) plus Homework (30 mins.)
Friday: P.O.P. Session 10 (30 mins.) plus Homework (30 mins.)

Week 5:

Wednesday: P.O.P. Session 11 (30 mins.) plus Homework (30 mins.)
Saturday: P.O.P. Session 12 (30 mins.) plus Homework (30 mins.)

Week 6:

Tuesday: P.O.P. Session 13 (30 mins.) plus Homework (30 mins.)
Friday: P.O.P. Session 14 (30 mins.) plus Homework (30 mins.)

Chapter 5 The Power of Clarity Part II: Negative and Positive Consequences

As Jason drove home after the first meeting with David he felt some strength and optimism returning. He was excited to get started on his homework assignment and clarify the consequences of viewing pornography. He didn't know what to expect in future discussions with David but he felt that the direction was promising.

As Jason walked in the door, he heard noise from the kitchen. He closed the door a little loudly, hoping his kids would hear. Bailey, his four-year old daughter, would usually come running and jump into his arms. He waited briefly and then when he didn't hear the familiar pattering of Bailey's feet as she ran from the kitchen, he walked towards the kitchen. As Jason walked into the kitchen he remembered yelling at Bailey last night when she spilled her milk and it splashed all over his suit pants. He didn't read to her before bed because he was still mad about the milk and was busy watching TV to recover from a hard day's work.

Bailey didn't turn around from coloring at her small table in the corner of the kitchen when Jason greeted her, "Hi Bailey." He wasn't going to spoil her so he didn't react when she didn't respond. "Hi Mike." Mike was sneaking something to eat from the cupboard and turned quickly. "Hi Dad," he said with little emotion in his voice.

Mike, seven-years old, had asked Jason to play soccer with him last night but Jason was too tired. He rationalized that the season would be starting soon and then he would be able to play soccer with Mike on the practice field as his assistant coach. Mike quickly left the room and didn't even ask Jason about playing soccer tonight.

Jason's wife Becky was stirring something in a pot on the stove and looked like her normal, emotionless self. "If she would come to life," Jason thought," especially in the bedroom, then my life would improve 100% and I wouldn't have to resort to pornography to satisfy my urges." He hated the way she sulked and gave him the silent treatment after he yelled at the kids. "If she would discipline them more, then I wouldn't have to yell at them. Oh well, another miserable night at home; I'm used to it." Jason hugged Nicole in her high chair before walking into the family room to watch TV with Mike.

"Well, were you able to complete your homework?" David asked when Jason sat down opposite the large cherry wood desk in David's home office. Two days had passed since their first session.

"It was easier than I thought it would be. I was able to come up with 15-20 negative consequences of pornography viewing pretty quickly. Some of them really rang true to me, like you said they would. I placed them among the top five on my list. The positive consequences of living a loving life were a little easier to list once I had researched the negative consequences." Jason paused, then remarked, "I'm actually pretty proud of my lists."

"Good to hear," David beamed. "I'm proud of you for keeping your commitment to follow the

program. Not only are you here on time, but you also completed your homework. I'm eager to go over it with you. But before we go over the lists, tell me a little more about your research. Did you find most of the items on your list from the academic research?"

"The academic research was interesting and laid out some serious negative consequences from rigorous studies but the real-life stories told by men with pornography addictions hit home with me. I found that the consequences of both lists were more alike than different."

"Well, show me your list," David requested.

Jason smiled at David's eagerness to look at the lists. He felt the satisfaction of accomplishment and the warmth of approval from someone he respected. Jason opened his binder that he used for his discussions with David.

Top Five Negative Consequences of Viewing (and Doing):

1. **Decreased capacity to love. Increased anger towards spouse and children. Difficulties in relationships with others and with God.**
2. **Marital disharmony. Lack of sexual intimacy. Poor regard of spouse.**
3. **Self-loathing, lack of self-esteem and lack of confidence**
4. **Guilt, fear and depression, and numb emotions**
5. **Poor performance at work**

"It looks like you may have compiled a list of 15-20 items but grouped them to narrow it to five," David laughed.

"I know it looks that way, but let me explain. The first consequence that struck me as being so true in my case and is harmful not just to me but to my family is the decreased capacity to love. The research, the stories, the reactions from spouses and children all pointed to this as a major consequence.

"I believe the increased anger towards those we love most, or should love most, and the difficulties in relationships with them and with God are a result of the decreased capacity to love. I also think that viewing pornography is repugnant in the Creator's sight so one loses "His light" when he does it. I believe He is the source of love, so it's natural to have love decrease when one is engaged in a viewing habit.

"This not only rang true with my religious beliefs but was confirmed by the academic studies, which surprised me a little."

"What caused the surprise?"

"In the past I often thought that nothing is really wrong with viewing pornography, it's just that my parents and my church taught me that it was wrong. Growing up with those beliefs of course made me feel guilty for viewing. I thought if I was just able to overcome the guilt from growing up in a

prudish household, then I would be normal and fine.

"Based upon the research, the personal experiences and how it rings true to my own experience, I now believe that the loss of the capacity to love is a natural consequence that comes to everyone who views. It is not just a product of a socially conservative upbringing. What I'm trying to say is that all of the evidence I found, including academic research, points to the fact that a viewer loses some, I personally think it's a lot, of his ability to love others."

David was listening intently. Jason noticed that David always listened to him intently. He was encouraged by David's attentiveness and continued. "What do you think?"

David paused before answering, as if he were searching his memory. "I can't think of a person who was a viewer who didn't suffer from a lower capacity to love and to feel love. Based upon those I've counseled, I like to describe it as viewers capacity to love 'drops like a rock.' Viewers rarely see their limited capacity to love until they have a lengthy period of true abstinence and see some of the capacity restored.

"A lot of the academic research you referred to as backing this consequence discusses the bonding that takes place between the pornographic images and videos and the viewer. This bonding prevents bonding between spouse, potential spouse, family members and others and the viewer.

David continued, "I don't normally like to make judgments on your personal consequences list but I think this is one of the biggest and 'baddest' consequences of viewing and doing so I'm glad you listed it first. Well, please continue."

"I guess you could tie number two, marital disharmony/lack of sexual intimacy/poor regard of spouse, back to number one as well but I thought it was so important that it should stand on its own. I haven't felt deep love for my wife in years and to me it clearly ties back to my pornography use."

Jason corrected himself. "I mean it is clear now that my pornography use harms my ability to love my wife. It wasn't quite so clear to me before the research. I thought that she was partly or mostly to blame."

Jason continued, still speaking quickly and excitedly, "My ability to connect with her physically is also harmed. The pleasure I receive from pornography is robbing me of the joy that comes from sexual intimacy with my wife. My alienation from her and my viewing her as another "object" push us further apart. I didn't realize until I was reading the experiences and stories that I was viewing her as an object and a means to my sexual satisfaction. It was another 'ringing true' experience for me.

"I often secretly blame her for my addiction, thinking if she were willing to have sex more often I wouldn't turn to pornography. I realize that it's a lie and I'm the one causing marital disharmony.

David interrupted. "I'm glad you shifted the blame from your wife to you. That is a key component of healing and we'll get into it in more detail later when we discuss increasing personal responsibility and getting rid of victim language."

"I've learned from my research, and now it's clearer to me that I've also learned from personal experience, that you can't love your spouse deeply, you can't regard her highly when you have a viewing habit. This exercise helped me realize that my addiction is the problem in our marriage; it isn't anything that she is doing."

"As I was researching, I also thought how recently I've felt somewhat 'out of love' with Becky. I also notice how big her faults seem and how she isn't as pretty to me as she used to be. I then recalled my 'porn-free' or life of love time, and how I felt more in love with her and noticed more of her good qualities than her faults and noticed how good-looking she really is to me.

"This was another strong impression that it was my viewing and doing that caused me to feel out of love, to magnify her faults and to even make her appear not as beautiful to me. It was a powerful experience."

David observed, "I'm impressed with the depth of your feelings about the first two consequences you listed. Do you see the value in compiling the list yourself? I could have provided you with the list but your learning and internalizing the consequences would have been much less. And your understanding of your personal experience would not have been enhanced like it was."

Jason continued, eager to continue telling David about his experience, "I think you're right. Let me tell you more about number three and the feelings I've had." Jason was excited about his discovery of consequences he knew were there but had been cloudy for a long time.

"Number three, the self loathing and lack of confidence, came from some of the 'academic-but-more-from-a-religious-angle' studies I found on the internet. These were professors who were also men and women of faith who performed research on the effects of pornography. They describe the increase in self-hatred, increase in depression and the drop in self confidence as natural consequences of pornography that impact the entire life of the addict.

"This rang true to me. I had often ascribed these feelings to my conservative religious upbringing but now believe that they are natural and real consequences of viewing and doing. I truly and deeply experience the self-hatred and diminished self-confidence. I don't feel like I amount to much if I can't control this addiction. I also don't feel bold in taking on projects, initiatives, community service or some of the activities I used to do.

"The cloudiness of the lack of confidence is going away as I see the low opinion I have of myself and how it makes me quick to anger and to blame, slow to forgive and impatient. I can now see more clearly the impact of viewing on my interaction with others, especially my family but even with my colleagues."

Jason looked down at the floor and continued.

"I'm sorry if number four, guilt, fear and depression, and numb emotions, seems similar to number three but to me they were separate and distinct consequences. Maybe the guilt, shame and

depression lead to the self-loathing and lack of self-esteem and lack of self-confidence but the feelings are strong so I wanted to list them separately.

David didn't respond verbally but nodded his head in approval of Jason's list.

"Sometimes the depression and feeling trapped with no way out or the guilt and shame of stooping to something you know is wrong can be overwhelming. I feel like I'm doing something wrong and I know it but I can't stop.

"I used to vow to myself after every incident that this was the last but my guilt, shame and depression increased every time I broke that vow. More recently, I didn't think I could keep the promise to myself so I stopped making it. But the shame and guilt don't go away and the depression is real.

"I think the absence of spirituality in my life leaves a void that is filled with guilt, shame and depression. I also think my inability to leave it alone when I know it's bad creates a lot of guilt and self-doubt. That's why I think I was so concerned about failing if this program required me to use self-discipline--I don't have any.

"I used to think that the guilt and shame originated from my religious upbringing but saw them both as consequences in the academic studies as well. I believe it's morally wrong to view and do but even if I didn't, the guilt and shame would still be there. The simple fact that I can't stop doing it produces both guilt and shame. I guess the addiction leads me to believe that I'm less of a person that I thought I was.

"Number five, 'poor performance at work,' was something I had realized in the back of my mind before doing the research but it really hit home to me as I studied it and pondered it. I used to feel like I could separate the pornography addiction from my work life but the many stories I read made me feel that poor performance at work is a natural consequence of viewing and doing. It probably has to do with the decreased ability to have meaningful relationships and the lack of self-confidence but it's very real.

"The poor work performance may also have to do with the amount of time I spend viewing and doing that others are spending focused on sharpening their skills and actually performing work. Regardless, I believe my progress at the office has been stalled by my pornography habit."

Jason paused. He was breathing heavily after talking fast and with passion. David smiled. "What a great list, Jason. I think your research paid off. I doubt that any of these consequences felt new to you. You probably realized subtly that they were natural consequences of your addiction but were now clarified. To go back to our stupid stick and cloud analogies, you cleared the clouds blocking the picture of the consequences. Now the consequences are more clear."

"Before we move on to the positive consequences list of living life without pornography, please share with me some of the consequences you excluded from your list.

Jason turned to the binder and showed David his lengthy list of other negative consequences. As David glanced at the list Jason commented, "I could have spent several more hours compiling the list of negative consequences to choose from. I decided I had enough so I turned my focus to the positive list."

David looked up, "Yes, you have quite a list already. I'm glad you included some of the serious consequences on your list." I'm impressed that you included many references as well so you can re-read the context in the future. You'll find that referring to the list regularly is an important part of keeping the clouds away."David continued reading the list.

Negative Consequences:

Experiencing severe consequences due to sexual behavior, and an inability to stop despite these adverse consequences. In Patrick Carnes' book, Don't Call It Love, 1991, some of the losses reported by sex addicts include:

Loss of partner or spouse (40%)
Severe marital or relationship problems (70%)
Loss of career opportunities (27%)
Unwanted pregnancies (40%)
Abortions (36%)
Suicide obsession (72%)
Suicide attempts (17%)
Exposure to AIDS and venereal disease (68%)
Legal risks from nuisance offenses to rape (58%)

Dramatically reduces capacity to love *Treatment & Healing of Pornographic and Sexual Addictions* by Dr.Victor B. Cline, PhD - April 1999

Marked dissociation of sex from friendship, affection, caring, and other normal healthy emotions and traits which help marital and family relationships *Treatment & Healing…*

Repeatedly masturbating to deviant pornographic imagery (either as memories in the mind or with explicit external pornographic stimuli which risks (via conditioning) the acquiring of sexual addictions and/or other sexual pathology. *Treatment & Healing…*

"…Marital or couple disharmony, sometimes divorce, and sometimes the breaking up of other valued relationships. *Treatment & Healing…*

Loss of free agency. *Treatment & Healing…*

Strong correlation between pornography and sex crimes. Stan Weed, Pornography: a review of scientific literature, *National Coalition for the Protection of Children and Families.*

Miss a profound opportunity for what many have described as a spiritual connection between ourselves, our spouse, and God, in exchange for the temporary gratification of our individual lusts and desires. Jeffrey R. Holland, *"Personal Purity"*

Difficulties in their relationship with themselves, with others, and with God. Being thus cut off from these sources of emotional strength, the person is then more susceptible to the influence of negative thoughts and beliefs that end up in their minds. Jeffrey R. Holland

Destructive emotional avoidance strategies. Jason Briere, *"Trauma: assessment and treatment in adult interpersonal violence,"* presentation given at annual Treatment Conference of the Utah Domestic Advisory Council, 2000.

Development of compulsive behavior patterns as we find that pornography use temporarily relieves our negative feelings *Pornography Use: Consequences and Cures*, Paul James Birch

Negative feelings (guilt, shame, etc.) See A. Dean Byrd and Mark Chamberlain, *Willpower is not enough: why we don't succeed at change*, Deseret Book, 1995, ch. 1, and Carnes, Out of the shadows, pp. 99-116.

More susceptible to problems in relationships because there is a sense of feeling cut off or isolated in their shame. *Pornography Use: Consequences and Cures*, Paul James Birch

Depression, low self-worth, hopelessness, fear, guilt, shame, financial problems, eating problems, anxiety disorders, inability to deal with sexual abuse issues, inability to form lasting relationships, idealization of hoped for relationships, intense criticism of actual relationships, disturbances in relationships (particularly spousal and parental) *Pornography Use: Consequences and Cures*, Paul James Birch

Progress is washed away with each relapse. *Pornography Use: Consequences and Cures*, Paul James Birch

Marital happiness, self-esteem, stress management, parenting relationships, etc., are all potentially compromised. *Pornography Use: Consequences and Cures*, Paul James Birch

Decreased sexual desire for spouse Bridges, A.J., Bergner, R.M., *Romantic partners' use of pornography: Its significance for women*. Journal of Sex & marital Therapy, 29, 1-14

Decreased sexual intimacy. Schneider, J.P. (1998(. *The new "elephant in the living room:" Effects of compulsive cybersex behaviors on the spouse*. CyberPsychology & Behavior, 1(2), 169-186.

It will destroy your home life. It will destroy your marriage. It will take the good and beautiful out of your family relationships and replace these with ugliness and suspicion. Gordon B Hinckley, Ensign, November 2000

Overspending and Debt. Manning, J.C. (2005). *A qualitative study of the supports women find most beneficial when dealing with a spouse's sexually addictive or compulsive sexual behavior.* Doctoral Dissertation.

"Social life suffered. So did my schoolwork, family ties, and—most important—my spirituality." "Danger Ahead! Avoiding Pornography's Trap," New Era, Oct 2002, 34

"At the very time I most needed the promptings of the Spirit in my life, I was less and less able to feel anything. Life became a constant struggle against depression. "Danger Ahead! Avoiding Pornography's Trap,"

"My soul hungered, but the only thing I fed it offered no nourishment. I would **get down on myself,** so I would delve into pornography to feel better. But the pornography would **upset me even more**.

"**Guilt, fear, and depression** are common emotions for those involved with pornography—guilt, because they know what they are doing is wrong; fear, because they are terrified their secret will be found out; and depression, because they no longer feel the Spirit.

Relationships with family, friends, Church leaders, and the Lord are damaged.

"**My self-confidence dwindled** in church, school, and everywhere. Many times I felt very alone, awkward, and unworthy. If a girl liked me, I would think, "She wouldn't like me if she *really* knew me." I would shy away from being social.

"I noticed a **change in my own countenance** day by day, year by year**. I became calloused and hardened**. I found myself **lying** to my parents, my bishop, everyone around me. Inside I was going through **personal turmoil and spiritual torment**.

"I loathed myself" Breaking the Chains of Pornography, Ensign, Feb 2001

"Numbs the feelings" Breaking the Chains of Pornography, Ensign, Feb 2001

There were a few more items on the list but David's face showed some strain. David, who practiced being aware of his feelings as often as he could, recognized the "cold" feeling that came with reading so many negative consequences, including those that devastate the lives of the viewer and his family. He put the list down deliberately and stated, "That's enough of the negative. Show me your positive consequences list. We will build on your positive list as our main goal today."

Jason turned the page in his binder and showed the list to David.

Top Five Positive Consequences of Living a Loving Life:

1. **Increased love for spouse, kids, others I care about leading to deeper, meaningful**

relationships

2. **Marital harmony. Greater regard and deeper love for spouse. Rekindled spark**
3. **Strong performance at work**
4. **Happiness. Spiritual connection. More depth of emotions**
5. **Self-confidence, self-love. Get my swagger back.**

David smiled. "This list looks a lot like the list of negatives, just the opposite."

"I guess the positive consequences of not viewing pornography that are the most important to me are the opposite of the negative consequences I most fear."

Jason looked at David, waiting for a reaction. The concerned look on David's face puzzled Jason. "I wonder what he's thinking."

David started speaking slowly. "Jason, I'm thinking about the positive consequences list and am worried a bit that you may have, but not deliberately, taken a shortcut with the process."

Jason was still puzzled. "What do you mean?"

"What I really liked about your negative consequences list was the passion and the personal discoveries you made during the research process that led to your owning the negative consequences as your own, as something that you believed applied to you in a personal and real manner.

"I feel confident that you've begun the process to keep the negative consequences cloud-free because you believe them deeply and personally. I don't feel the same passion about the personal discoveries and personal ownership of the positive consequences. Can you help me understand why?

"Before you explain, let me tell you why I'm concerned. I've found over the years in helping many men and some women overcome viewing and doing that the ones who succeed are the ones who do it for themselves. Let me explain.

"I've had several people come see me for the same training you're here to experience. They come for a variety of reasons. Some come because they're tired of living with viewing and happen to meet someone who is familiar with our program. Some come after trying other programs and failing. Some come because their spouse discovered them and threatened them if they didn't get help. Some come because a therapist convinced them it was necessary for their marriage. Some have even come under a court order for help with deeper sexual addictions.

"I've found that regardless of why someone initially came to us, those who make the program theirs and identify the negative *and* positive consequences that matter most to them, not to their families, to their therapists or to their judge, are the ones who succeed. When a person beginning the program feels a personal connection and belief in the negative and positive consequences, they are more likely to succeed than those who identify consequences that are less personal and show a "doing it for another, not myself" attitude.

"I want to understand your list of consequences, to help you assess whether they are personal to you, and if they capture the passion and personal ownership to keep the clouds at bay and take the power back from viewing. Does that make sense?"

Jason thought for a moment and then stated, "I think my passion and ownership is solid but I didn't follow your directions precisely so that may be reflected in my lists. I researched the larger list of both negative and positive consequences before picking my top five of each. I think that if I would have started talking about the positive consequences first, you would have felt the same passion.

"I refined the larger lists of negatives and positives down to five at the same time so the lists look alike. But some of the 'after' parts of the 'before and after' experiences from others who've overcome viewing struck me as very positive and I felt ownership, belief and a strong desire to experience the positive consequences myself."

The smile returned to David's face. "Great. Thanks for that explanation. I'm sorry I took us off track briefly but now you know how important this part of the program is.

"I want to pause now and talk a little bit about why we refer to not viewing as living a loving life or living a life of love. When we state our goal as 'not viewing pornography' we are expressing a desire to refrain from an action with negative consequences. When we state our goal as living a loving life, we express a desire to take action that gives us positive consequences.

"I'm not sure what the difference is. What do you mean?" Jason asked.

"You'll find in the next session how important it is to focus on the positive consequences of living a loving life so don't worry, you'll see the difference clearly after the next session. But before we go on, will you please go over the positive consequences with me? I liked your summary of the negatives and would love to hear the same thing with the positives."

Jason was still animated, speaking a bit louder and in a slightly higher than normal voice. "Of course. When I think about number one, increased love for those most important to me, it became crystal clear in my research of not only how this was a natural consequence of not view—oops, I mean of living a life of love, but how vitally important a deep, loving relationship with my wife is to my happiness.

"It seemed like every research study, religious advice and others' personal experience I read pointed to these relationships being the key to happiness in life. I don't mean to sound surprised because actually I've known deep down that it's true. It's just that it had been a little cloudy for me."

David smiled at Jason's use of the word cloudy. He was "getting it."

"I now view it not only as a positive benefit but also as a high-priority goal so I can really "live" my life with those I love and not just coast through it tolerating them with periods of anger and hatred towards them because of my viewing and doing addiction. I truly believe that the relationships I develop and maintain with my wife, kids and other family members as well as friends are vital to

my happiness and well-being.

"I guess number two, better marriage relationship and better regard for my wife is similar to number one but I think it better captures how living a loving life can help me respect her and not objectify her, to not expect her to be and act like a porn star but to love her for who she is.

"It was interesting to see that teenagers, young adults who aren't married and other single people encountered the same benefit. It just was not with their spouse. But they had a much easier time building and maintaining connections with those they dated or wanted to date. It led them to see and respect the person as he/she really is and not as an object. They were able to know with much greater certainty if the person was 'marriage-worthy' because they were seeing them through 'non-viewer' eyes.

"In fact I found it interesting that the experiences related by single people were fascinating with the 'marriage-worthy' question. The blindness caused by viewing hurt their ability to see beyond the sexual relationship or potential sexual relationship to the things they had in common and their compatibility and their ability to be best friends in marriage. If I were single, this would probably be the biggest consequence for me. Who you marry is such an important decision and to have it clouded over by the viewing blindness would make a wise decision almost impossible.

"We touched on number three, strong performance at work, when we covered the negative consequences, but I was a little surprised at how clear this benefit was in all the personal stories I read. Improved work or school performance always followed the recovery. I started to think about the ways I could advance in my company or even join another company at a higher level.

"For the adolescents, the pick-up in school grades was clear: students' grades generally but clearly improved when they started living a loving life. I say generally because some of the studies showed student viewers were able to maintain high grades but their learning was inferior to students living a loving life. I was interested in researching the consequences to adolescents because that's when I started viewing."

David nodded his head. Jason could tell that the benefits were not new news to David but that David was enjoying hearing Jason's personal insights into them.

"Number four, increased happiness, greater spiritual connection and greater depth of emotions, was very real in the research, both academic and religious. I don't think anyone can maintain a spiritual connection, however they define it, when viewing or doing. There is too much natural shame and guilt that result from it. But the feelings of freedom, general happiness, spiritual connection and ability to see and appreciate beauty when men went from viewers to living a loving life were clear in the research. Living a loving life leads to greater happiness.

"I could spend more time on number four because it's such a huge positive consequence in my mind and really rang true but I think you get the picture." David nodded his approval.

"I think number five, increased self-confidence, goes along with the rest. When you can love

and feel deeply, you can have self-confidence. But I think it's also deeper than that. When you live a loving life, you feel more in control of your self, your time, and your life in general. The feeling of control, especially having some control over viewing, gives you confidence. I found that the self-confidence was also just a natural result of living a loving life."

"Thanks Jason. I can tell that researching the consequences was a great experience for you. I would guess that you spent a lot more time than one hour on your homework."

"Yeah. I probably spent over four hours, but it zoomed by and only felt like one."

"I hope you see the value of clarifying consequences. Sometimes it's a matter of learning the consequences, but most of the time we know the consequences; they've just become cloudy with time and with our rationalizations and need to be made clear."

Jason smiled as he said "I can't think of a more valuable use of the four hours. It was profound for me and truly lifted the clouds on consequences that I knew were there. It also made me aware of consequences I had not associated with viewing and doing before but rang true to me as I discovered them. Thanks for giving me the homework."

"If you will review your top five lists of negative and positive consequences regularly, you'll gain strength to live a loving life and overcome the power of the lustful life that viewing produces."

Just as Jason was asking himself why he needed to review the lists regularly, David mentioned in response to reading the doubt in Jason's face, "You're probably wondering, especially now that the consequences are so clear in your mind, why you need to review them regularly." Jason was getting used to David knowing what he was thinking by reading the expression in his eyes and on his face. He just nodded.

"Our minds like to focus on the immediate consequences and forget about the long-term consequences. If we don't review them regularly, they become cloudy again and drift further from our minds. When this happens, we over-emphasize the immediate gratification, start viewing again and then become subject to the negative consequences.

"In terms of our brain, if we don't interrupt the stimulus/response of the reptilian brain by bringing the logical thinking brain to the forefront with clear and real consequences our brain reverts back to the old wiring of just responding to the stimulus or trigger by focusing on satisfying it by viewing and doing. Does this make sense?"

As soon as David asked the question, Jason felt that this was true in his own life. Even though he knew in his heart that viewing and doing produced negative consequences, they weren't very clear in his mind and were overpowered by the desire for short-term gratification.

David continued, "We'll discuss the power of repetition in detail later, but I want to mention it now because of how it applies. Sometimes repetition gets a bad reputation. We associate it with being

boring, mindless or with requiring little expansion of ourselves. You should know, and probably do know but don't always recognize, that repetition is a powerful force in realizing goals and developing positive habits.

"When you repeat a goal frequently in writing and in speaking, it becomes part of you. Its achievement then becomes almost inevitable. You in essence take something that typically hangs out in the vague recesses of your mind and bring it to the forefront.

"The same applies to repeating the consequences, both negative and positive, but with more emphasis on the positive. When you repeat them regularly in writing and in speaking, they move to the forefront and you reflect them in your actions naturally and with greater ease.

"When you don't review and repeat them for a while, they become cloudy, seeking to hang out in those vague recesses of your mind again. Then, in moments of challenge, they do not readily come forth to aid you.

"Does this make sense?"

As Jason thought about the way his mind worked, he realized that this made sense to him and nodded his head in agreement.

"Another way to put it is that the repetition helps rewire a new pathway in our brain but the old pathway remains. As we continue to practice (repeat) and review the new action, the new pathway gets more and more light and the old pathway grows dimmer. If we stop practicing, the new pathway grows dim and the likelihood increases that we revive the old pathway of viewing and doing.

"Being in business and especially in a finance area, you probably hear at work that 'defining the problem is 50% of the solution.' Defining and clarifying the consequences may be 50% of the solution to overcoming your pornography addiction.

"To gain greater power over pornography, you'll need the other 50% so are you ready to move to step two in our next session?"

Jason sensed the power of clarifying consequences but realized half-measures almost always produced poor long-term results so he nodded his head to let David know he was ready to move to step two.

"Before we move on, I have one other point to reiterate with clarifying consequences. It's important for you to focus on the *positive consequences* of living a loving life. That's why we do them last. When you review your consequences, you'll benefit much more from the positive ones--the more clear, positive and emotion-filled, the better. Clouds can come back if you don't review the positive consequences regularly.

"To keep the clouds away and to continue to start forming the new neural pathway, your homework this session is about repetition."

Homework for The Negative and Positive Consequences:

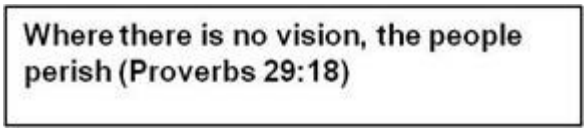
1. **Rank your top five negative and positive consequences and list them in priority order, from most meaningful and impactful to least**
2. **Re-write your re-formulated negative and positive consequences list (Keep the clouds away with repetition) once per day while reciting them (aloud if possible—if not possible, then recite them "out loud in your head").**
3. **Re-read the key concepts from this lesson**

Note: *Please refer to* www.poweroverpornography.com/consequences *for the latest additions to the negative consequences of pornography and for the positive consequences of living a loving life. Please add additional consequences that you've experienced or discovered in your research.*

Chapter 6: The Power of Vision

Vivid Vision

David began writing on the white board: "Where there is no vision, the people perish...Proverbs 29:18."



"The second and possibly the most important step in your training is developing your vision, specifically relating to overcoming your addiction. You'll come to see how the power of your vision can lift you above your addiction.

"You already suggested that you are at risk of losing the love of your family if you persist in viewing and doing. Based upon your discussion of positive consequences at our last session, I believe you, like me, consider the most worthwhile parts of your life to be your relationships with your family. Relating to the verse from Proverbs, I think we can relate losing the love of our family to perishing. Not quite the same, but similar feelings. Life's richness is diminished greatly without our family relationships.

"I think you'll find it interesting based upon your research that includes teens and singles that the most worthwhile relationships for us as teenagers still center on our families. Teens suffering from a viewing/doing addiction tend to take their anger out on their parents and siblings so they lose that love when viewing but they get it back strongly when they live a loving life. Just ask their parents," David smiled.

Jason didn't smile back. "Jason, you seem a little fidgety. Is something on your mind?"

"I had a great experience with the power of clarifying consequences and keeping the clouds away from them but I'm not feeling it with the vision thing. It seems a little 'out there' to me. I guess I'm saying that my cynical self if starting to creep into my thoughts." Jason surprised himself at his honesty."

"I'm glad you let me know about both the experience you had with the power of clarity and also how you're not feeling it with the importance of vision. Let me put it this way: You're going to develop a simple two-to-three sentence vision statement that builds on the positive consequence list.

"The vision statement you develop will be a powerful driver in your overcoming viewing and doing. You may have to extend your trust a little more but it all comes together within a few sessions and you'll see how a strong vision will provide you power when you are tempted to view. Do you think you can relax that cynic of yours and extend the trust?"

"Sure. Based upon the power I felt with the consequences list, I feel like this is headed in the

right direction."

"Great. Let's continue. Before we can create a new reality for ourselves, we have to be able to create it in vision. Consider the words of James Allen, author of "As a Man Thinketh,"

> **"He who cherishes a beautiful vision, a lofty ideal in his heart will one day realize it. Columbus cherished a vision of another world, and he discovered it; Copernicus fostered a vision of a multiplicity of worlds and a wider universe, and he revealed it; Buddha beheld the vision of a spiritual world of stainless beauty and perfect peace and he entered into it."**

"Our next step in gaining power over pornography is to create your positive vision of living a loving life. We discussed using the phrase 'living a loving life' as a positive expression of not viewing pornography. I want to reiterate the importance of phrasing 'overcoming pornography' in a positive way.

Before we move to the positive consequences of living a loving life, let's talk about the power of positive.

When you are reaching for positive goals and consequences, you will be motivated to take the action to achieve them. When you are focused on avoiding negative consequences then you will tend to be demotivated and to be filled with fear and anxiety. We'll spend some time creating a vision out of your positive consequences within the next few modules.

"By the way, positive consequences that relate to others and not directly to you don't inspire enough either. In the future, we'll talk about how the consequences need to focus on you directly.

"You know about many of the negative consequences yet you've persisted in viewing and doing so clearly the negative consequences alone do not have the power to stop a viewing and doing habit.

"Let me illustrate how focusing on the negative or the problem is usually not the way to the solution." Please look out the window but don't imagine a purple hippopotamus standing on your car, crushing the roof and hood."

Jason understood immediately. "Oh, I get it. You asked me to not imagine a purple hippopotamus standing on my car but I couldn't get the image out of my mind. In fact, I pictured a cartoon-like animated hippopotamus smiling as he was smashing my car."

"So if your vision focuses on not thinking about pornography, then what word will you not be able to get out of your mind?"

"Pornography."

"Precisely. If you phrase your desire to overcome pornography as 'not viewing pornography' the last word left in your mind is pornography. You'll want to infuse your vision with positive

statements and words, not with 'overcoming negative' statements. **Your mind will want to focus on the picture you give it, so give it a positive picture.**

"If you're ever tempted to state your vision or other goals in 'not negative' terms, then correct yourself by thinking of the purple hippo smashing your car while smiling at you. If you're focusing your mind on getting him off your car, he'll stay around, stomping dent marks all over it.

"I think you'll like the vision development process but it requires more homework. This homework is vital to the development of a vivid, positive vision for yourself. The vision itself is vital to your recovery.

"Speaking of homework, one reason I asked you to rank and re-write your positive consequences list as part of your homework last session was to make sure you keep the consequences top of mind so they can form the foundation for your vision. We'll get back to that in a minute but let's establish the foundation first.

Before we launch into developing your vision, I want to emphasize its power to you. Will you please read the following quote from Jim Rohn about achieving dreams?

Achieving Your Dreams

by Jim Rohn

While most people spend most of their lives struggling to earn a living, a much smaller number seem to have everything going their way. Instead of just earning a living, the smaller group is busily working at building and enjoying a fortune. Everything just seems to work out for them. And here sits the much larger group, wondering how life can be so unfair, so complicated and unjust. What's the major difference between the little group with so much and the larger group with so little?

Despite all of the factors that affect our lives - like the kind of parents we have, the schools we attended, the part of the country we grew up in - none has as much potential power for affecting our futures as our ability to dream.

Dreams are a projection of the kind of life you want to lead. Dreams can drive you. Dreams can make you skip over obstacles. When you allow your dreams to pull you, they unleash a creative force that can overpower any obstacle in your path. To unleash this power, though, your dreams must be well defined. A fuzzy future has little pulling power. Well-defined dreams are not fuzzy. Wishes are fuzzy. To really achieve your dreams, to really have your future plans pull you forward, your dreams must be vivid.

If you've ever hiked a fourteen thousand-foot peak in the Rocky Mountains, one thought has surely come to mind "How did the settlers of this country do it?" How did they get from the East Coast to the West Coast? Carrying one day's supply of food and water is hard enough. Can you imagine hauling all of your worldly goods with you... mile after mile, day after day, month after month? These people had big dreams. They had ambition. They didn't focus on the hardship of getting up the mountain.

In their minds, they were already on the other side – their bodies just hadn't gotten them there yet! Despite all of their pains and struggles, all of the births and deaths along the way, those who made it to the other side had a single vision: to reach the land of continuous sunshine and extraordinary wealth. To start over where anything and everything was possible. Their dreams were stronger than the obstacles in their way.

You've got to be a dreamer. You've got to envision the future. You've got to see California while you're climbing fourteen thousand-foot peaks. You've got to see the finish line while you're running the race. You've got to hear the cheers when you're in the middle of a monster project. And you've got to be willing to put yourself through the paces of doing the uncomfortable until it becomes comfortable and until you realize your dreams.

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“Thanks Jason. Would you agree that Jim was referring to vision with the word dream throughout this quote?”

“I do agree. He is certainly not referring to the unconscious dreams that come to us during sleep.”

“The reason I like vision better than dreams is that vision denotes clearly seeing while dream seems a little vague. Will you now read through it again, this time substituting the word ‘vision’ for ‘dreams’ and selecting and stating the phrases that stand out to you? I’ll write some of them on the board.”

“Sure.” Jason felt inspired by it and wanted to read it again anyway.

As Jason began mentioning phrases from the quote, David wrote them on the whiteboard.

- Nothing has as much potential power for affecting our futures as our ability to vision
- Vision is a projection of the kind of life you want to lead.
- Vision can drive you.
- Vision can help you skip over obstacles.
- Vision unleashes a creative force that can overpower any obstacle in your path.
- A powerful vision is well defined. A fuzzy future has little pulling power.
- Well-defined vision is not fuzzy.
- To really achieve your vision, to really have your future plans pull you forward, your vision must be vivid.
- Achievers have big vision.
- Achievers don't focus on the hardship (negative)
- Achievers' vision is stronger than the obstacles in their way.
- You've got to be willing to put yourself through the paces of doing the uncomfortable until it becomes comfortable and until you realize your vision.

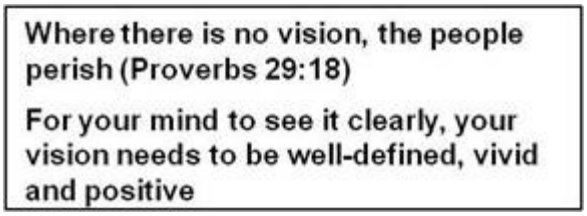
“Thanks. Now let’s focus on the attributes of vision that make it powerful and drive achievement. What attributes from the quote or from your experience make a vision powerful enough to drive action?”

“I don’t have much experience with vision but a few things stood out from Jim Rohn’s statements. ‘Well-defined,’ ‘vivid,’ ‘didn’t focus on hardship’ are the ones that stand out to me.”

“Those stood out to me as well. Let’s start crafting a vision for you that is well-defined, vivid and positive. If your mind can see your vision clearly, it will be better able to maintain it as a force to drive the achievement of it. **For your mind to see it clearly your vision needs to be well-defined,**

vivid and positive."

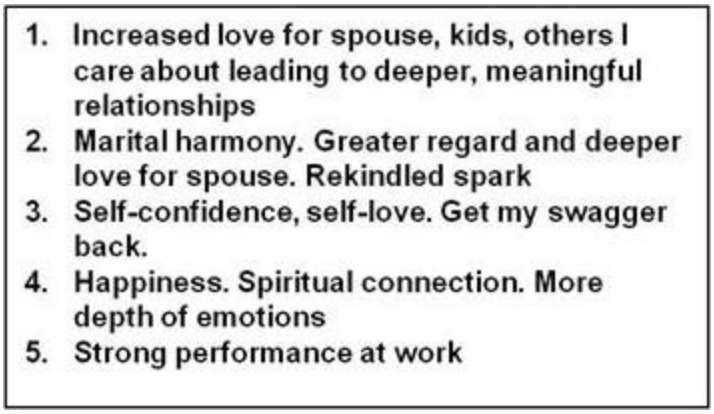
David turned to the white board to write the last statement.


Where there is no vision, the people perish (Proverbs 29:18)
For your mind to see it clearly, your vision needs to be well-defined, vivid and positive

"Jason, would you retrieve your notebook and review your newly-ranked five positive consequences of living a loving life? Before you do that, did you complete your homework assignment from last week? Both the review and the homework will help you form the basis of your vision."

Jason pulled his notebook from his briefcase as he started talking. "I thought this homework was going to be much easier than the last one but I struggled to rank the positive consequences. I reviewed them all and decided that number one is number one; I really want more love between me and my wife and also between me and my kids."

Jason handed the notebook to David and noted, "You can see how I re-ordered the other consequences. Although performing well at work is important to me and to my self-image, I realized that regaining my self-confidence and swagger is more important as is reconnecting spiritually.


1. Increased love for spouse, kids, others I care about leading to deeper, meaningful relationships
2. Marital harmony. Greater regard and deeper love for spouse. Rekindled spark
3. Self-confidence, self-love. Get my swagger back.
4. Happiness. Spiritual connection. More depth of emotions
5. Strong performance at work

"I think that is an excellent number one and I'm glad you put the thought into ranking the others. Your goal now will be to review the list of ranked positive consequences and begin to formulate a *vivid* vision.

"As you look through the positives, are there any themes that stand out or any important points than can be components of your vision? Remember, your vision is what you want your life to be as a result of living a life of love. You want to make it vivid so that your mind can see it clearly."

As Jason looked at the list, four things stood out to him that he strongly desired to be part of his future life:

"Love, personal, marital and family happiness, self-confidence and work achievement stand out as important parts. They're all important to me but maybe we can start with these."

"Okay. I like the idea of your number one positive also being first in your list of stand-out consequences. I think these can be part of your vision, but let's try to make them more vivid, so your mind can picture them easily. First, increased love is a definite result from living a loving life. The first quality that declines when a person views pornography is his ability and capability to love. The difference to the viewer can seem subtle and small but it's generally stark to family members and results in the viewer's expression of anger, in his display of a short temper and in his magnification of others' flaws.

"I believe love should be part of every pornography viewer's vision statement because it is so vital to developing and maintaining strong relationships and such an important component of happiness. Tell me how you can make love a clear, vivid part of your vision."

"That's tough. It's a little like the high school English assignment to describe love or other emotions. I struggled coming up with a concrete definition with that assignment too."

"Think about the ideal loving relationship with your wife and kids. Maybe thinking of a scene in the future that would be the result of your living a loving life would help."

Jason started thinking and sharing his thoughts at the same time. "Your statement about magnifying flaws is sticking in my mind because of how I've been focusing on my wife's weaknesses and thinking that my kids need discipline to correct all the things they do wrong.

As I think about it, I'm pretty sure their wrongs and weaknesses are ordinary but I'm blowing them out of proportion. I've come to believe that blowing their weaknesses out or proportion is a consequence of my viewing and doing.

He replayed the scene of his arrival home just two nights ago and how he blamed his wife and children for a miserable evening. As Jason thought about David's words he realized that the miserable evening was his own fault. His lack of love for his family, caused by his viewing, was truly destroying his most important relationships.

David sensed from the troubled look on Jason's face that he was still stuck in the negative past, "Jason, sometimes putting yourself in a certain "happy place" within your vision can help you get started."

Jason smiled at the phrase "happy place." He thought of the fun that he had as a kid at the lake, fishing and boating with his own family and with his uncles. He had written in his journal as a boy that the lake was a "happy place." He continued to enjoy it as an adult. He knew his wife enjoyed it as well, more for the beauty than the fishing and boating, although she seemed to like waterskiing when the conditions were right and the old motorboat was working.

"How about this? Feeling deep mutual love and togetherness with my wife and children as we

watch the sun set over the lake."

"Great start. What else do you want to capture in your vision from your positive consequences list?"

"I want to capture it all but if it's too long it will lose some of its "realness."I think I would like to capture the self-confidence and better performance at work. How does this sound? Boldly advance in the office with outstanding performance."

David didn't seem to like this part as well. "Well, Jason, you're definitely right about not wanting to make it too long. In the not-too-distant future you will review your vision in your mind frequently and want to make sure it follows the KIS principle."

Jason thought, "**K**eep **I**t **S**imple **S**tupid." He preferred the added "S" on the end to emphasize the message. It was one of their mottoes at the office to make sure they didn't overcomplicate their analysis. They referred frequently to the KIS(S) principle.

David continued, "Is the career performance part of your vision vivid enough to evoke emotion? **Emotion has more power to drive our behavior and actions than intellect does."**

Jason thought for a few seconds, and then suggested, "Feel deep love for my wife and children as we watch the sun set over the lake and I watch their smiles. Feel confident and satisfied, knowing that my excellent performance on the job drives success there."

"Great progress. I sense more emotion in this version. I also get some of the "vivid" from the sunset, lake and smiles. Deep love has emotion but isn't quite so vivid. Same with "confident" and "satisfied." Any thoughts on how to make them just a bit more alive, a bit more tangible so you can picture them vividly?"

"I'm drawing a blank for now."

"That's okay. Sometimes our mind needs time to simmer on a thought before it comes up with the right solution. Let this one simmer for a bit and then focus on it later today or tomorrow to make it more vivid."

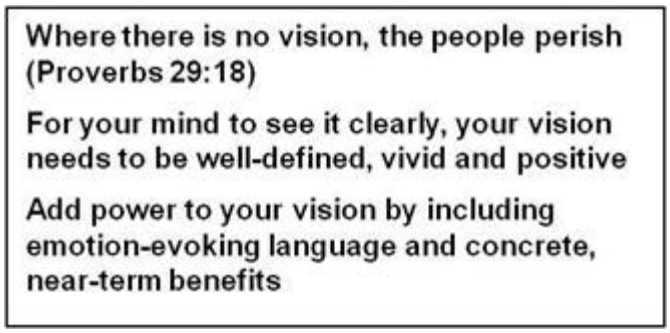
Jason wasn't ready to let the thought simmer. Before David could move on, he blurted, "How about this? He was thinking out loud but didn't like to leave things until later. "Demonstrate my deep love for my wife and kids by hugging, laughing, listening, talking and spending time doing what they like to do accompanied by smiles and sunsets at the lake. Confidently complete top-notch work on time, exceeding expectations and feeling that I deserve the promotion."

"Winner, winner, chicken dinner."

Jason couldn't hold back his laughter. He didn't expect to hear that from an "old guy" like David.

David smiled and chuckled at Jason's reaction. "Although not perfect and maybe not vivid enough for some people, you are an accountant so your vision is probably vivid enough for you." They both laughed.

David captured some of the important components of vision on the whiteboard:


Where there is no vision, the people perish (Proverbs 29:18)
For your mind to see it clearly, your vision needs to be well-defined, vivid and positive
Add power to your vision by including emotion-evoking language and concrete, near-term benefits

"I like your vision but here are a couple suggestions:

1. It's important that your benefits be for you. Your family will naturally benefit but they should be secondary beneficiaries. Your chances of success in the program increase when the benefit is directly for you.
2. You now have three different visions that will be hard to keep clear. Hugs, sunsets and top-notch work. Brevity is important in your vision because it will be something you refer to over and over. You want it to roll off your tongue easily, paint the same picture in your mind every time. You also want it to be simple

"Hmmmm. I like what you're saying. What if I change it to:

'Show my deep love for my wife and kids by hugging, laughing, listening, talking and spending time doing what *we* like and confidently initiating and completing work that exceeds expectations.'

"I hate to lose the lake and sunsets. They were vivid but I don't think they tied in quite so well as the other visions. Now I'm down to two visions. Do you think it's okay?"

"Great improvements. I think it meets the criteria but the important question is do you? David wrote on the white board as he asked questions of Jason:

- Does it paint a picture in your mind?
- Are the benefits directly yours, not others?
- Is it brief?
- Is it easy to say?
- Is it simple?"

Where there is no vision, the people perish (Proverbs 29:18)

For your mind to see it clearly, your vision needs to be well-defined, vivid and positive

Add power to your vision by including emotion-evoking language and concrete, near-term benefits

Vision Criteria:

1. Does it paint a picture in your mind?
2. Are the benefits of your vision directly yours, not others?
3. Is it brief?
4. Is it easy to say?
5. Is it simple?

The accountant in Jason came out: "Hey, rule of five again with five criteria. Let me see if it meets them." Jason began thinking out loud again.

"It paints a clear picture in my mind of me with my wife, then with my kids hugging and laughing together. I can even see my sense of humor coming back.

I've changed the benefits to be more mine than my family's.

It's not the briefest but I think I can keep it in my mind.

It's okay at being easy to say but I can work on that

I think it's pretty simple.

So far, I think it does meet the criteria but I'll let it *simmer* for a while and come back to it to make any changes."

"Well, I think that's enough for today. I hope you're starting to sense that this is different than what you've tried before and has some power to help you. I think you'll find great sources of power in the upcoming sessions when we cover the power of acknowledging and accepting and the power to choose. You're going to discover powers in these simple concepts that you never thought possible. You'll also learn why your power to choose is crucial to the program.

"Also, don't forget the homework. Your vision is merely a wish if you don't continue vivifying it, making it brief and repeating it so it becomes a part of you."

Note: *Please see samples and real-life visions of others and share your current vision at* www.poweroverpornography.com/vision

Homework for Vision:

1. **Write your ranked five positive benefits of living a loving life. Repeat them in your mind three times each.**
2. **Write your vision statement five times. Remove any extraneous words. Put emotion-**

evoking words in it. Repeat it in your mind five times. Picture it in your mind each time you say it. Attempt to memorize it.

3. **When you experience a trigger or feel a temptation to view and/or do, note it and keep track of the number of instances.**

David drove home feeling a little lighter. Instead of listening to what happened in the markets, he listened to his favorite music station and sang along with the music all the way home.

Chapter 7: The Power of Acknowledging and Accepting

"Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom." Victor Frankl, Man's Search for Meaning

"Bailey, Bailey, Bailey, come here quickly," Jason shouted excitedly as soon as he stepped in the front door. He heard the familiar patter, one of his favorite sounds, as Bailey came running.

"Look what I found outside." Jason held up a big caterpillar. He knew Bailey loved bugs of all kinds, but especially caterpillars. She jumped up and down and asked if she could hold it. "Of course."

Bailey grabbed the caterpillar eagerly but tenderly so she wouldn't hurt it. She dashed into the kitchen, yelling, "Mom, can I have a jaww? Look at the 'catapiwwa' Daddy bwung me. I need to put him in a jaw wif hoes in the top so he can bweave."

Jason followed her into the kitchen. She was still jumping up and down and the whole family started to feel her contagious excitement. "Hey Mikey, how was school today?" How about showing me your soccer skills after dinner?"

"Are you sure Dad? You're usually too tired to play."

"I'm sure. I hear you can really kick the ball."

"I can. I scored two goals at recess today."

"Great. Let's see what you've got."

Jason glanced at Becky, who was smiling, sort of. She may have been expressing some surprise as well. "Dinner won't be ready for 15 minutes if you two want to go outside now."

Mike lit up and before she could finish her sentence, dashed off to get his soccer ball. "Let's go Dad."

Jason picked Nicole up from her baby walker and gave her a big kiss. She smiled at him. He didn't want to set her down but had an obligation outside.

"So, Jason, how was your day today?" David asked as Jason arrived at the door.

"Great. I made a difference the other night with my kids after our session on vision and I still feel good from it. I made it a goal to make each one feel happy and had some success. I decided to quit feeling sorry for myself and look for ways to help my children."

"Glad to hear it. We're going to be talking a little about feeling sorry for oneself as we talk about the power of acknowledging and accepting today. Come in.

David kept talking as they entered the house, then the office. "I noticed you didn't say anything about how it went with your wife last night. Anything I should read into that?"

"I'm starting to feel a bit more love for her just from the consequence and vision sessions and exercises. I can see that the somewhat strained state of our marriage is my fault, not hers but I still don't know how to begin fixing it. I still feel pretty bad about how my viewing has hurt our relationship and hurt her for so many years."

"I'm glad you're feeling more love for your wife and for your kids. I think as you continue in the program and work on getting your power back, you'll know how to begin realizing your vision with her.

"By the way, I didn't see you at the weekly 12-step meeting last night. Are you going to a different meeting?"

Jason looked a bit surprised, "I thought I wouldn't need to go to another 12-step meeting now that I'm doing this program with you so I haven't been going. Do I need to go?"

David responded with caring. "It's always your choice to go or not. I attend because of the healing power I feel from others who share, for the strength I receive and for the strong spirit that is there. There is power in sharing and admitting our weaknesses and although I've been 'viewing sober' for 22 years, I know that I'm still vulnerable."

Jason felt good hearing David speak again. He felt the healing power, strength and strong spirit just being with David but as David mentioned the meetings, he felt the need to begin attending again. "I think I'll see you at the next meeting."

"Jason, I'm excited about today and I'm excited about the happy mood you bring with you. We're going to talk about a simple but strong power that you may not have heard discussed this way before."

As Jason turned his head to the front of the office, he noticed a quote written on the board.

> *"Problems do not go away. They must be worked through or else they remain, forever a barrier to the growth and development of the spirit...The truth is that our finest moments are most likely to occur when we are feeling deeply uncomfortable, unhappy, or unfulfilled. For it is only in such moments, propelled by our discomfort, that we are likely to step out of our ruts and start searching for different ways or truer answers."* – M. Scott Peck

He thought David would reference the quote later even as he recognized the truth in it and felt some satisfaction in knowing that he was "working through" his problem instead of wishing it away.

David began without referencing the quote on the board, "One of our goals is to turn your unconscious choice to view into a conscious one. We need to switch your handling of the viewing and doing temptation from your response-only brain or, as we mentioned before, your reptilian brain to your logical brain, where there is a space between stimulus and response to weigh consequences. We began that process with one of the homework assignments from last session. Do you recall the assignment to note each time you experienced a temptation to view?"

"This was one assignment that I did out of my commitment, not because I thought it would be helpful." Jason spoke plainly and directly to David. He was not used to sharing his thoughts so directly but David made him feel comfortable sharing even if the sharing had the potential to be controversial.

"I didn't understand why I would note each time I was tempted. In fact, it seems like noting it just makes me dwell on it more, which makes it more likely that I'll relapse. I'm not sure that it is helpful."

David smiled. He seemed to welcome Jason's thoughts even if they presented a potential contradiction with the program. "Thanks for letting me know. Many people view it the same way. Today, you'll learn why noting the temptation is part of the program. You'll also get some additional tools related to it that provide you with tremendous power. Just bear with me as we cover some other important concepts first."

Jason nodded his acceptance.

"We're going to start by asking you how you feel when you are tempted to view pornography."

Jason didn't need to think long to answer this question. It had been on his mind since he started meeting with David. "I feel guilty and powerless. I feel like once I feel the urge, viewing is inevitable because I'm weak. I also feel the self-hatred start to creep into my thoughts because I'm weak." Jason added, "Although I started to feel more confident after the first lesson with you and am feeling that clarifying the consequences and establishing a vision have given me more confidence that I can do this."

"I'm happy to hear that you're getting some of your confidence back. That is normal at this point in the program but we still have some important concepts to learn and to apply. In fact, we need to put it all together so you have the complete toolset in a step-by-step formula. That will come soon but for now, back to dealing with the temptation to view.

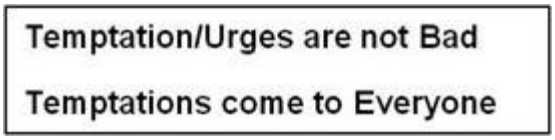
"Do you think that all men experience the same urges and temptations?"

"Probably, but some of the men at church seem like they have it together pretty well."

"You're right. Some do but all men have problems and all men experience temptation. In fact, almost all men and most women experience the viewing/doing temptation. We often judge ourselves more harshly than we judge others, although viewers are pretty harsh judgers of others with their anger and lack of love issues.

The best men in the world feel the urges and temptations that you feel, even those who seem to have it together pretty well. We want to work on disconnecting the urge with the pornography viewing itself. One way to do this is to recognize that all men have the same urges, although we don't know the degree to which we each feel them."

Jason wrote on the white board: "Temptation/Urges are not Bad" and "Temptations come to everyone



"There is no reason to feel guilty or powerless when the temptation comes because it comes to everyone, and is just a thought with no power, except the power we give it. The next time you experience the temptation by whatever trigger it is, think about it this way: "This is just a thought/feeling/temptation. It does not reflect on me because temptations come to everyone without exception. I need not feel guilty, shameful, powerless or weak just because I feel tempted to view and do.

"One of the ways we give our power away to the temptation is feeling guilt and shame when we experience it. The first step in taking your power back from temptation is this: Realize that the temptation is not the source of the guilt and shame. The action we take after experiencing the temptation is the cause of the guilt and shame."

"Hold on David. I sometimes experience temptations to do some pretty awful things that I doubt if others experience, at least in the same way or to the same extent. It's hard not to feel guilty and shameful when I feel tempted in this way."

"Jason, what is it about your temptations that makes you feel that they're different than what others experience and what is it about them that makes you feel guilty and shameful?"

"Well…I'm embarrassed to tell you but I often feel tempted when I see a beautiful woman either in person or on TV, in movies, wherever, to want to have sex with her. It may not be realistic but it's still the temptation. It seems wrong to have thoughts of being unfaithful to my wife."

"I appreciate your candor. I don't know if your temptation is that different from what others experience although it's certainly difficult to know the frequency and degree of strength of others' temptations. I encourage you to think of your temptation as merely a thought with no power. Think of your particular temptation as one that is common to not just you, but to others. You'll find this attitude will help you as we move into our next steps.

"Can you think of each temptation that emerges as just a thought with no power to shame or to make you feel guilty?"

"I think so. As you're discussing it, the thought of treating it as a powerless thought that is common to many is appealing. Maybe my guilt and shame is due to my always, or almost always, acting on the temptation in the past. So when I feel the temptation, I also feel the emotions of acting on it because that's the norm."

"Good thought. Let's move on. The second way we give our power to the temptation is to resist it."

Jason was surprised by this statement and blurted, "What do you mean we give power to it by resisting it? Are you saying just succumb to it and view and do? That doesn't make any sense at all." Jason's voice was raised and David detected anger creeping into it.

David calmly replied. "Seems like you're feeling pretty feisty today, Jason. That's okay. The concepts you're leaning are new to you. Your reaction is not unusual when someone first hears that resisting the temptation takes power from us and gives it to the temptation. We've been taught all of our lives that we should resist temptations to do things that can bring long-term sadness. It seems counter-intuitive to now say stop resisting."

Now Jason could agree. "Yeah, way counter-intuitive."

"I'll ask you to suspend your inner skeptic for a moment while I walk you through how not resisting is different than succumbing and how resisting works against your taking control. Let's first discuss the principle and then get into practical ways to demonstrate its effectiveness."

David's words calmed Jason's emotions as Jason realized his skeptical, "feisty" self had caused him to stop listening.

David continued, "As Stephen Covey stated, 'When we try to kill a feeling, it struggles for life. When we let it live, it dies birthing.' The founder of modern psychology, Carl Jung, stated it another way: 'What we resist, persists.'"

"In the past, it has been natural for you to view and do upon experiencing the temptation. You've associated the temptation directly with viewing with no space between being tempted and acting on the temptation. Your focus has been on trying to avoid triggers and situations that would bring temptation to mind so you wouldn't experience the temptation. You thought this would prevent you from viewing and doing. Let me state this as plainly as I can: This doesn't work.

"When you attempt to resist the temptation, it fights back and stays around."

Jason interrupted, "I still don't get it. I'm trying not to be skeptical but what is the alternative to resisting? I thought the only other alternative was to succumb to the temptation and view and do"

David smiled, “I’m glad you asked. There is a third alternative that is much more powerful than resisting or, of course, succumbing. Let me walk you through it.”

“The first step is to acknowledge the urge as plainly as possible. When we feel the temptation to view pornography, we deprive the temptation of power when we acknowledge it with a simple statement like, ‘I want to look at pornography’ or ‘I want to look at pornography and masturbate.’ Using our vocabulary, ‘I want to view and do.’ Referring to the temptation you mentioned, ‘I want to have sex with that woman.’”

“Practice this in your mind by repeating your most common viewing/doing temptation. It could be the temptation you mentioned that is responded to by viewing and doing. By simply acknowledging the temptation in this way instead of trying to force it out of your mind, you let it live, which puts it well on its way to dying.

“Acknowledging the temptation is crucial to your success in this program. In fact, if you skip this step, you’re not likely to succeed. You’ve probably been trying to suppress the temptation for a long time. As Dr. Phil would ask, “How has that worked out for you?”

Jason wasn’t sure about David’s sense of humor but couldn’t help but smile. “Not so great.”

“Just like the purple hippo, when we try to suppress the temptation to view pornography, it stays around in our mind until we act on it or acknowledge it. Most viewers aren’t used to acknowledging it, believing the temptation itself is an expression of their own inadequacies or evil nature. By realizing it is natural and comes to all, it becomes easier to acknowledge.

“Acknowledging is crucial to success because it places you in control of the temptation instead of the temptation controlling you. David turned to write on the board:

‘We give power to ourselves when we_____acknowledge the temptation plainly, directly and specifically.’

Temptation/Urges are not Bad

Temptations come to Everyone

1. **We give power to ourselves when we: _____ acknowledge the temptation plainly, directly and specifically.**

“You’ve sparked my curiosity with the missing word,” Jason remarked.

“I think you’re beginning to see the power of acknowledging but there is an important element that I left out of our discussion about it and thought you may have fun trying to guess it.”

Jason looked at the board and thought out loud, “Hmmm. How about ‘boldly?’”

"Oh. I like that. Maybe we'll have to add 'boldly' to the statement as well. But the answer has to do with timing."

"Timing? That helps a lot. I would guess that you would want to address the temptation 'immediately.'"

"Correct. You win the prize, which in this case is my congratulations. You seemed pretty sure about the need to acknowledge the temptation immediately. Why do you think that is important?"

"The purple hippo came to my mind. I thought that the more time I let pass from when the temptation arrived, the more car-smashing the hippo would do. In other words the more you let the temptation hang around without acknowledging it, the more likely you are to act on it."

"Great way to put it Jason. Let me cover a couple of other important points about this power. Earlier, when I asked you to practice acknowledging in your mind by repeating your viewing temptation, what did you think in your mind?"

"I thought, 'I'm being tempted to view and do.'"

"If you change your wording, you'll take back even more power. Practice acknowledging in a way that gives you responsibility. In other words, starting the acknowledging sentence with 'I want to…' means you're taking responsibility for the urge or temptation. Starting the sentence with "I'm tempted to…" takes you off the hook just a little by assigning the temptation to forces outside of you. Although the temptation may originate from outside of you and your thoughts, can you see the subtle difference and recognize how taking personal responsibility gives you more power?"

"I think so." Jason responded.

David usually stopped and explained when Jason gave hesitating or ambiguous answers but merely mentioned "you'll see it even more clearly as we go on" and continued.

"Let me emphasize one other point that I alluded to earlier. Remember how we discussed the idea that temptation, and particularly the viewing/doing temptation, comes to virtually all men?"

"Sure."

"The main reason I brought that up was to allow you to more easily accept the temptation once you acknowledge it. Some people will acknowledge the temptation while still experiencing guilt over having it. They don't accept it as normal.

"The second important component of this lesson is acceptance of the temptation. In other words, once you acknowledge the temptation, you accept it as normal, just a thought, something that everyone experiences. You acknowledge and accept is as occurring right now to you. The acceptance removes the guilt and shame and allows you to deal with it at a conscious level.

"In the past, you've dealt with the temptation at a subconscious level, automatically reverting to the shame cycle reaction that meant, "If I experience the temptation, then I view and do." The acknowledgment and acceptance now unlink the temptation from the action and allow you to deal with it. Does that make sense?"

David turned to the white board while waiting for Jason's response. David felt anxious if he was writing while Jason was speaking. David heard just as much from Jason's expressions as he did from Jason's words and was worried he may miss something if not looking at Jason while he spoke.

Temptation/Urges are not Bad
Temptations come to Everyone
We give power to ourselves when we:
• Immediately Acknowledge the temptation plainly, directly and specifically.
• Accept the temptation as normal, not unusual, and accept experiencing the temptation without shame or guilt.

Jason appreciated the frequent 'Does that make sense' questions from David. "It does. My skeptical self still does not want to believe that merely acknowledging and accepting the temptation will solve the problem. But I'm beginning to see how it is more effective than just moving right from temptation to action."

"That's all I'm asking for now. You're right that acknowledging and accepting alone won't solve the problem but combined with the powers and tools we'll cover in the upcoming session, it will. You'll see just how the resisting works against us as you learn how to use one of the greatest powers of the entire course next time."

Homework for Power of Acknowledging and Accepting

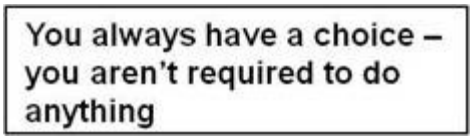
1. **Write your vision and state it five times. (Remember, practice helps rewire your brain)**
2. **Acknowledge every temptation by stating it in personal responsibility terms…"I want to view…" or "I want to do…" or "I want to have sex with that person."**
3. **Accept each temptation as normal. Remind yourself that it comes to everyone and should not be associated with guilt or shame.**

Chapter 8: The Power to Choose

"Another way we give power to our temptation is to tell ourselves that we must not give in to it. When we are told by someone that we must not do something, we typically rebel. We don't like being compelled to do something by others. We also don't like being compelled by ourselves.

"When you tell yourself you must not give in, you attempt to compel yourself to act in a certain way, depriving yourself of your freedom to choose. When you take the power from yourself through compelling statements, you give the power to the temptation. But remember, you always have the power to choose.

Jason turned to the whiteboard and wrote: 'You always have a choice – you aren't required to do anything.'



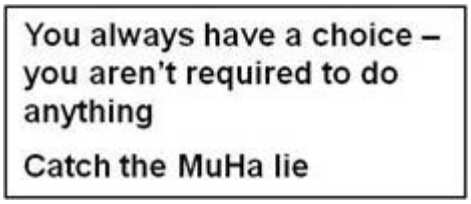
Jason was intrigued by this. He felt the truth and power of the statement but hadn't thought about it this way before. He thought that he lacked self-discipline in not being able to follow through when he told himself he must quit or he had to quit. Maybe he was just rebelling against a statement of force. When he told himself that he must not give in, he rarely was able to get the temptation out of his mind and had almost always succumbed to it.

As usual, it seemed like David read his mind. "When you say "must" or "have to" to yourself, you give your power to the temptation and then you're rarely able to overcome it." In fact, I like to refer to these words that try to force us to do something as the 'MuHa' lie.

"When you tell yourself you MUst or you HAve to do something, you're lying to yourself. You don't have to do anything. You have your choice all the time. Even a prisoner can choose not to follow orders. He may suffer severe consequences but he still has a choice.

"Whenever you tell yourself that you must or must not do something or that you have to do something, just laugh with a deep MuHahahaha! Combining the MU from must and the HA's from HAve to can be a fun and effective way to remember. It will remind you that you just lied to yourself and tried to take away your right to choose."

Jason couldn't help but laugh when he heard David try his deep, MuHahahaha laugh. As Jason was laughing and practicing his MuHahahaha laugh, David wrote on the board, "Catch the MuHa lie."



"Whenever you hear yourself saying any of the following, catch yourself and state in your mind that it's a lie:

I must…
I must not…
I have to…
I can't…
I've got to…
And then change your language to 'I choose to…'"

"Another important concept of free choice is the ability to change choices. If when you make a choice, you are required to stick with that choice for the rest of your life, then you've taken away all future choices. This is against the nature of free choice.

"If you make choices that can't be changed in the future, what have you done to your power to choose?"

Jason was confused. "I thought that commitment was an important part of overcoming pornography so I guess you have to make the choice not to view, I mean live a loving life, and then your future choices will be limited."

"What does that do to your future freedom to choose?"

"I guess it takes it away."

"So the next time the temptation to view and do hits you, what do you tell yourself?"

"I guess you would tell yourself that you can't view because you exercised your choice some time ago."

"I think you're right—if you made the choice once, then you would resort to MuHa in the future. This goes against the nature of your freedom and would cause you to rebel against yourself. The likely result would be that you would feel deprived because you no longer had a choice.

"Once you start feeling deprived, you then start to feel like a victim and start using victim language and feeling sorry for yourself. Then you're left with fighting the temptation instead of accepting it and choosing your actions. This cycle almost always ends in succumbing to the temptation.

"So as much as we would like to make the choice once and limit all future choices, it doesn't work. Limiting future choices makes you feel deprived, which leads to being a victim, which leads to thinking you deserve to view, which leads to viewing and you're right back into the miserable cycle of viewing and doing, feeling guilty, resolving not to do it again, feeling deprived, feeling need to view, etc."

Jason thought that his made sense but wasn't sure how to maintain a commitment and maintain

his freedom to choose. “What is the solution?”

“The solution is the simple truth that every decision you make is momentary. You make a decision for this instance only and no other. You preserve your right to choose differently in all future instances.

This solution does not deny your prior commitment but tells the basic truth that you can always choose to violate that commitment so you always maintain your freedom to choose your actions, no matter what the circumstances or moment.”

“That seems like it would work against you, having to make the decision every time you’re faced with the temptation.”

David smiled. “I know it may seem like that but as we put it all together you’ll see how it is the only way to preserve your freedom to choose and your freedom to choose is one of the greatest powers you have and one of the greatest powers of this entire program. One of my favorite quotes that illustrates the importance of this God-given power is “Next to the bestowal of life itself, the right to direct that life is God’s greatest gift to man. …Freedom of choice is more to be treasured than any possession earth can give.”[i]

When you give yourself the freedom to choose differently next time, how can you feel deprived?” You’re only choosing for this instance so you’re free to view and do upon the next temptation.

“This feeling of freedom gives you power, power that you long ago gave to the temptation, often with the thought, ‘This is the last time.’ But it never was the last time. Your freedom to choose differently was gone. The time has come to take it back and you’re almost there.

“I believe that choosing once in the form of a commitment can help us establish what we want in life and then make the choices that are consistent with getting there but we succeed when we are free to choose each time.

“I also tend to believe that those who are not addicted can choose once and then just re-confirm that decision upon future temptations. But it doesn’t work for addicts. Maybe it’s because we’ve tried and failed so many times at long-term commitments that we know subconsciously that doing so again is a failure path. Regardless of the reason, realizing that we are free to choose differently every time gives us power.

“In summary,” David stated as he began writing on the white board, “each of our choices is momentary. When we try to make them more permanent, then we are choosing for the future, which feels like compelling ourselves to make a certain decision.

You always have a choice – you don't have to do anything

Catch the MuHa lie

Every choice is for this instance only

"Let's get back to compulsion and using 'force' language. We just learned that we naturally rebel against compulsion even when it comes from ourselves. Let's review and expand that a little more before discussing other elements of the power of free choice.

"What are some of the phrases we use to try to compel ourselves to take certain actions, stop thinking specific thoughts, or to change our behavior?"

Jason recalled the MuHa acronym and how he used it in his own self-talk and the language he usually used. "'I must do it' or 'I must not think these thoughts' is probably my most common. I also tell myself 'I have to do this.'"

"I think these are very common. Can you think of any other ways we try to compel ourselves to action? Think of some of the ways your parents may have tried to talk you into doing or not doing something when you were a teenager."

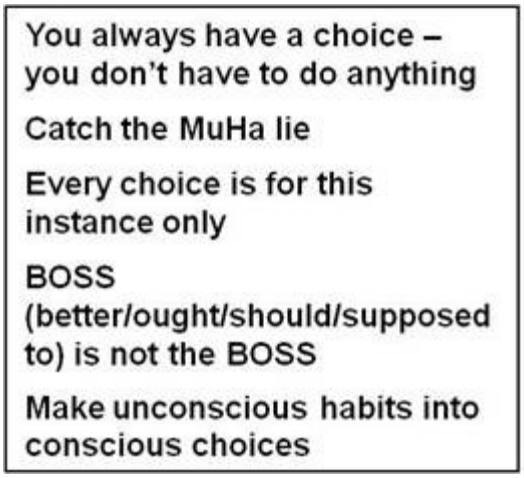
When my dad was mad he would usually say 'You better not." My mother would usually say 'You should clean your room' or 'You should do this or should not do that.'"

"Good. So you've listed four ways we use language to compel ourselves to do something: MuHa and "BS" for Better/Should. I don't care for the BS acronym so I added another letter in the middle: "O" stands for ought. Often times we tell ourselves that we ought to or ought not to do something.

"One of the other common ways we try to compel ourselves to do something is when we say 'supposed to,' such as "I'm not supposed to eat cookies before dinner" or "I'm not supposed to look at another person's computer" or "I know I'm supposed to go to bed now but this TV show is too good to turn off." Supposed to produces the same feelings as better and should. We feel compelled and we naturally rebel against it. Now the acronym is BOSS, which fits quite nicely. When we use Better, Ought, Should or Supposed to in our language, we're making them the boss instead of leaving the bossing to ourselves and our own power to choose.

"Not only do you now have the MuHa laugh when using "force" language but you also have the BOSS acronym to catch yourself when you say you better or should or better not or should not view. Or when you say you ought or you're supposed to or you ought not or you're not supposed to. You have the choice so when you tell yourself this, immediately follow it up with a rousing "They're not the BOSS!" Whenever we use 'better,' 'ought,' 'should,' 'supposed to,' 'must,' 'have to' or similar words with ourselves, we are trying to compel ourselves to do something and our mind will not cooperate."

Jason liked the acronyms. They were funny and useful in remembering. While Jason was chuckling to himself, David wrote "BOSS (better/ought/should/supposed to) is not the BOSS" on the white board.


You always have a choice – you don't have to do anything
Catch the MuHa lie
Every choice is for this instance only
BOSS (better/ought/should/supposed to) is not the BOSS
Make unconscious habits into conscious choices

David kept writing as he spoke, "As we mentioned previously, one of the ways we gain power is to make our unconscious habits into conscious choices. This is directly connected to the use of 'force' language. Instead of saying, 'I must go to bed right now', we say 'I choose to go to bed right now.' An important part of the program and getting your power back is to always acknowledge that you have a choice.

"Sometimes this is a tough acknowledgement for viewers to make. They grasp the concept but have a harder time translating it into action."

"What do you mean?"

"Let me illustrate with an example. I typically mow my lawn during the growing months every Saturday afternoon. I can tell myself that "It's Saturday afternoon so I must mow my grass." This is a "force" statement and takes away my power to choose. I don't really have to mow my lawn. I can choose not to." What are the consequences of choosing not to mow?"

"Your grass gets long, your neighbors complain, you're embarrassed of your yard… it becomes harder to mow next time..."

"Those seem like logical consequences from not mowing, but the choice is mine. No one is forcing me to mow.

"Often, those who have a strong sense of duty to their tasks--and that strong sense of duty is a good thing--can have a difficult time putting the concept of choice into practice. What do you think?"

"As an accountant, I tend to have a strong sense of duty as well and haven't really thought of my actions as choices so it may take effort for me to implement but it feels right to me so I'm excited to try."

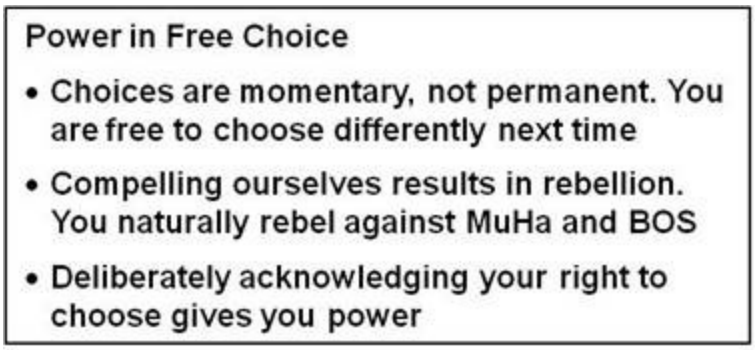
"Great. Let's move a little deeper."

Jason was a little surprised that David was moving on despite his wishy-washy answer. But he now trusted David completely and relaxed his inner skeptic almost immediately.

David continued, "We discussed earlier how important it is to acknowledge the temptation when it comes to you and to do it specifically. In the next breath after acknowledging the temptation you acknowledge your freedom to choose. The more deliberate, plain and direct your acknowledgement, the more power you retain to make the choice.

"For example, when you're tempted to view pornography, you state to yourself, "I want to look at pornography." Then you acknowledge your choice by saying to yourself, "And I'm free to choose." By acknowledging the choice, you've taken the power directly from the temptation and given it to you.

David began to write on the board. I know some of this is repetitive but I think it's important to solidify the concept and its application so we'll write it a bit differently:


Power in Free Choice
• Choices are momentary, not permanent. You are free to choose differently next time
• Compelling ourselves results in rebellion. You naturally rebel against MuHa and BOS
• Deliberately acknowledging your right to choose gives you power

"Let's discuss another element of the power of choosing. We discussed this one extensively in an earlier session but it fits in here as well. When we choose benefits or consequences, we give ourselves power. By deliberately stating our choice as one of benefits, consequences and vision, the *power* of choice becomes real.

"For example, if I don't like to run (or bike or exercise in another way) to get in shape but I have a vivid vision of having high energy and enjoying the benefits of being in shape, then my choice to run becomes easier. In essence, I don't say to myself 'I want to run.' This is not being truthful and is a deceptive way of trying to compel me to run.

Instead, I say to myself, 'I choose to have the energy to play with my kids for hours and to look great and feel proud of my body.' This is a vision I have that is truthful and focuses on the positive results, consequences and benefits. **Choosing a vision full of positive consequences is more powerful than the temptation.**

David added another bullet to the board:
Choosing vision, positive consequences, benefits and results gives you power

Power in Free Choice

- Choices are momentary, not permanent. You are free to choose differently next time
- Compelling ourselves results in rebellion. You naturally rebel against MuHa and BOS
- Deliberately acknowledging your right to choose gives you power
- Choosing vision, positive consequences, benefits and results gives you power

"Does this make sense to you Jason?"

"It's starting to make a lot of sense. I like the way the choice is not about viewing or not viewing but is about choosing the positive consequences."

"Great. We'll be getting into choosing vision a little more next session. The next session is when it all comes together and you have a concrete plan of action on dealing with temptation. So far, we've discussed the concepts and I can tell you're feeling their power but it's only when it all comes together that you'll feel the real power of the program.

"Don't forget your homework and we'll see you next time."

Homework for the Power to Choose:

1. **Write the following statements. After each statement, practice the MuHa laugh. If your family or colleagues call the police when they overhear you, you'll have some "splainin" to do.**
    a. **I must not view**
    b. **I must not do**
    c. **I have to be good**
    d. **I must go to bed on time**
    e. **I have to mow the lawn.**
2. **Write the following statements. After each statement, practice by saying "You're not the BOSS of me."**
    a. **I better not view**
    b. **I should not do**
    c. **I better stay off my computer tonight**
    d. **I should clean the bathroom**
    e. **I'm supposed to go out tonight**
    f. **I ought to turn off the computer.**
3. **Practice saying "I choose to…" whenever you would normally use compelling or "force" language. When you catch yourself using "must," "have to," (MuHa) "better,""ought," "should," "supposed to" (BOSS) or any other "force" language, such as "can't," or "got to," tell yourself it is a lie, that you don't have to, that you are not required to. It is your choice. You always have the freedom to choose.**

4. **Write and then state, "I always have a choice and my choice is for this instance only. I can choose differently the next instance." Practice this three more times before the next module.**
5. **Write and then state, "When I choose, I choose vision and consequences, not just action." Practice this three times before the next module**

When Jason parked in his driveway that night, he felt tired. Work was taxing and he felt emotionally drained after the learning at David's house. He felt like he wanted to sit in front of the TV for an hour just to recover. Jason caught himself, realizing that he was not just choosing actions, he was choosing consequences. He was letting his "lazy" mind dictate his actions, disregarding the consequences. Maybe the consequences were a little "cloudy" as well.

He turned towards the power to choose quickly. "Regardless of how I feel or how I'm tempted to act, I can choose how I respond and act. Not only will choosing a loving life help me realize my vision but choosing my reactions to other temptations, like sitting in front of the TV instead of helping Becky or playing with the kids, will help me realize my vision."

His plan to greet his kids with a forlorn, "daddy needs to rest" look faded completely as he chose to act lively and to be willing to help or play. With his exercise of his freedom to choose, the feeling of tiredness left, just like the temptation to view and do leaves when he chooses a vision of positive consequences.

Jason expected to be greeted with smiling, happy kids and a smiling, happy wife when he walked in the door (silly man). What he found was emptiness except for some loud banging noises coming from the kitchen. He strode quickly to the kitchen.

Becky was furiously fixing dinner, banging pots on the counter with gusto. Jason felt an urge to tiptoe away but stayed and asked, "What's wrong Becky?"

As soon as Becky turned to him, Jason regretted asking. "Your children (this is going to be bad —it always is when she calls the children "my "children) are in their rooms" Becky stated quickly and loudly. "Michael (full first name, not Mikey or Mike, another bad sign) broke the lamp, Bailey is nursing a bloody nose falling asleep in her bed and Nicole exhausted herself from the commotion and is sleeping as well."

Jason could tell that their sleeping was not accomplished without a great deal of effort on Becky's part. "Your son (there it is again) decided to play soccer in the family room and asked Bailey to be the goalie. He kicked the ball so hard, it bounced off her nose and hit the lamp."

Jason felt a little pride in hearing how hard Mike kicked the ball. He quickly hid that thought and moved closer to Becky. He could tell she was ready to cry but she continued. "I finally stopped the blood from Bailey's nose. All this happened while Nicole was screaming because Bailey was screaming. Once Bailey calmed down and wanted to go lay in her bed, I held Nicole until she fell asleep. I didn't even get a chance to yell at Mike because he went straight to his room. I told him you

would be talking to him tonight."

This is the point that Jason would normally start talking about how rough his day was as well, trying to one-up Becky's hard day. He felt the temptation weakly but caught himself and responded. "I'm sorry it was so hectic for you. I'll talk to Mike later. Are you okay?"

Jason moved to hug Becky and she almost lunged into his arms, holding him tight and crying. "I'm fine, just a little wound up. I really didn't like that lamp anyway." The tears turned to laughter and they both laughed and smiled. She let go and said "Let me finish getting dinner ready while you go talk to Mr. Indoor Soccer."

Jason kissed her and went to talk to Mike. As he was going upstairs, he thought about how he was changing a little. He felt love for his wife, a love he had not felt for her in months. He was concerned for her and it felt warm and "make-me-smile" good. He listened to her and felt like he responded halfway decently. Maybe he could make this work after all.

Jason had a short conversation with Mike, who was faking sleep when Jason first entered his room. Jason didn't get angry but complimented Mike on his leg strength (pretty sure this wasn't what Becky was expecting), clarified the no soccer in the house rule, helped Mike plan for his apologies to Mom and Bailey and arranged a payment plan to pay off the lamp, valued at $2.50. Becky's comment about not liking the lamp anyway probably saved Mike $10. Jason also agreed to play goalie for Mike outside after dinner.

Chapter 9: The Power of Acknowledge & Accept, Choose and Vision (ACV) Together

"Welcome back Jason, Today is the most important day of the program. This is the day when we put together the three vital elements of the program, As David spoke, he wrote these phrases on the board, '**Acknowledge and accept the temptation, Acknowledge your power to choose, Choose your vision of positive consequences.'**

1. Acknowledge and accept the temptation
2. Acknowledge your power to choose
3. Choose the vision of positive consequences

"These three elements are the foundation of the program and sources of your power to live a loving life. Let me illustrate.

"We can turn to my running choice as an example: 'I don't want to run (acknowledge and accept the urge/temptation) but I'm free to choose (acknowledge the power to choose) and I choose to have the energy to play with my kids for hours and to look great and feel proud of my body (choose the vision of positive consequences).

"When you say this to yourself, do you feel compelled or deprived of your couch potato status at all?

"No, but I enjoy running so it's hard for me to feel that way for this example but I see your point and believe that I would not feel compelled or deprived if I didn't like to run."

"Jason, why don't you make it more real for you by making the same statement regarding your viewing temptation?"

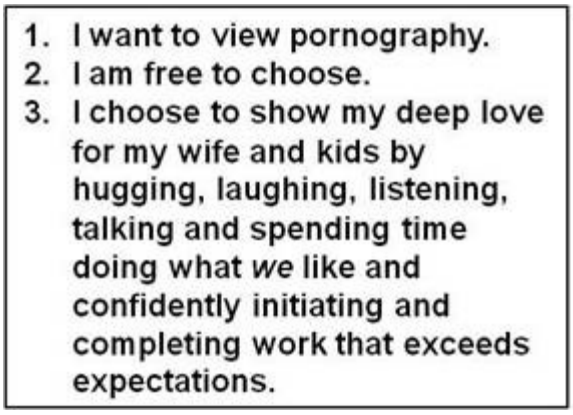
"OK, I'll give it a try. I want to view pornography…and I'm free to choose…and I choose to… umm, let me see." Jason turned to his notebook and read his vision. "**Show my deep love for my wife and kids by hugging, laughing, listening, talking and spending time doing what we like and confidently initiating and completing work that exceeds expectations.'**

"How does that feel? Do you feel compelled not to view pornography? Do you feel denied or deprived that you can't look at pornography?"

"No. It feels very empowering and freeing. I know that I can choose to view pornography whenever I want but it feels good to choose the vision. I smile when I think of my family smiling and I no longer feel the urge running around in my mind and the guilt and shame that come with it."

"Great. Like we discussed before, when you openly and honestly acknowledge the temptation, it struggles for life. When you try to kill it, suppress it, avoid it or substitute something else for it or let it linger, it struggles for life and stays around."

"Let's make it a little more real by putting it in writing." David turned to modify the writing on the white board **I want to view pornography, I am free to choose, I choose to Show my deep love for my wife and kids by hugging, laughing, listening, talking and spending time doing what *we* like and confidently initiating and completing work that exceeds expectations.'**


1. I want to view pornography.
2. I am free to choose.
3. I choose to show my deep love for my wife and kids by hugging, laughing, listening, talking and spending time doing what we like and confidently initiating and completing work that exceeds expectations.

"One other item we should discuss here is the power of the written word. Any idea what I mean by that?"

"Do you mean the power of inspirational books to help motivate us and keep us on the right track?"

"No, but I think that is an excellent idea. I don't know about you, but when I read scripture or other inspirational books, my motivation and personal power increase. I've often thought that this type of reading strengthens the power of my vision."

Jason thought that he would start reading his scriptures more and try reading other inspirational books to help him but he was still curious about the power of the written word. "I agree but you said no. What did you mean by the power of the written word?"

"You're getting me back on track, Jason. Here I go again speaking in broad generalities. Let me focus by reciting one of my favorite phrases: 'A goal not written is merely a wish.' Have you heard that before?"

"I have. I think it's a part of every goal-setting program my company has ever introduced."

"I've discovered that it is one of the fundamentals of not only setting and achieving goals, but to the success of this program, which I guess is goal-setting as well. In fact, success in this program is essential to setting and achieving goals in other parts of your life. Without overcoming viewing, your ability to achieve in any other area of your life is cut substantially.

"The way the power of the written word applies to this program is not only recalling in your

mind the three-step P.O.P. ACV, but also writing it and referring to it often. By the way, P.O.P. stands for '**P**ower **O**ver **P**ornography' and ACV stands for Acknowledge and Accept, Choose, Vision:

Acknowledge and **A**ccept (the temptation)
Express your freedom to **C**hoose
Choose the **V**ision

"I hope you don't mind all my acronyms but I find they make it easier to remember the key concepts and the ACV is the critical part of the program. I'm sorry it's not as catchy as MuHa, BOSS or P.O.P. but hopefully it will help you remember the key steps in dealing with temptation directly.

David grabbed a note card from the shelf and handed it to Jason. "While we have your specific three-step P.O.P. ACV on the board, why don't you write it on the card so you can take it with you?

"You may be worried about someone else finding the card, so you may want to write in code. Many people with a viewing/doing addiction can become so concerned about others finding out that they don't follow the program. Following the program is so important to your recovery that we want to take away that fear." David wrote again on the board: **I want to V (& D), I am free to choose And I choose deep love for my wife and kids by hugging, laughing, listening, talking and spending time and being praised for my work exceeding expectations.**

1. I want to V (& D)
2. I am free to choose
3. And I choose deep love for my wife and kids by hugging, laughing, listening, talking and spending time and being praised for my work exceeding expectations.

"I know I changed the vision slightly to make it shorter but to still capture the meaning. I recommend shortening it as much as you can so it becomes hard to forget. But it's your vision, so feel free to change it back.

Jason didn't respond so David kept talking. "You now have the fundamental building blocks to deal with the temptation directly and to choose a higher vision. My guess is that you're feeling the power of these building blocks and may even feel confident.

"I love confidence and feel it's essential to living a loving life and a productive, happy life. But there is a downside to it that I want to cover.

"Some people can feel confident enough at this stage that they believe they may be ready to leave the program. I always urge them not to because there are still some vital concepts to learn and ***practice*** before they're ready. The word ***practice*** will take on additional meaning and power in a future session. The next session will give you four powerful ways that you've given your power away and what you can do to get it back.

It's getting late. Let's end for today with your homework. I'm interested in talking to you next time about how this works for you."

Homework for the Power of ACV:

1. **When you catch yourself using "must," "have to," (MuHa) "better," "ought," "should," "supposed to" (BOSS) or any other "force" language, such as "can't," or "got to," tell yourself it is a lie, that you don't have to, that you are not required to. It is your choice. You always have the freedom to choose.**
2. **Practice the three-part approach to dealing with the temptation to view and do:**
    a. **Acknowledge and Accept the urge/temptation.**
    b. **Acknowledge your right and power to choose.**
    c. **Choose the vision and positive consequences of living a loving life.**
3. **Write the three step P.O.P., "Power Over Pornography," ACV, "Acknowledge/Accept, Choose, Vision," phrases in specific language on a 3x5 note card and read it every time you're tempted. This is a very important part of the program**

Note: *You can find a pre-formatted ACV card to print and carry with you at* www.poweroverpornography.com/ACVcard

Chapter 10: The Power of Stress, Anxiety and Discomfort

Jason climbed slowly out of the car, still trying to put together the pieces of the evening with David. This was the day he had been waiting for—the step-by-step formula to overcome his viewing. He thought he would feel great on this day but he felt some anxiety about his failed past and its meaning to his future.

Would this program really help him overcome his addiction? So far, he agreed with everything David taught him but was still nervous now that he was actually committed to implementing the program.

"Maybe the thought of leaving behind the viewing is making me nervous" Jason thought as he entered the house. He tried to put on his "game face" to play with the kids and treat Becky right. Becky seemed tired and irritated and the kids seemed to have swallowed some "wild" pills.

After struggling through the evening battling his own anxiety and trying to figure out why he wasn't connecting with Becky or the kids, Jason checked his email. He felt the temptation coming to him once he opened up the browser but he was prepared. He read his ACV card and then started checking email.

He focused on stating the temptation out loud in his mind and accepting it—it was okay to experience this temptation. He then said out loud in his mind, "and I am free to choose" followed by "and I choose to show my deep love for my wife and kids by hugging, laughing, listening, talking and spending time doing what we like and confidently initiating and completing work that exceeds expectations."

"Hey, maybe this is going to work after all," he thought as the temptation left him. The seriousness of the consequences along with the 'acknowledge and accept' thoughts had kept him viewing free since he started the program. Now he was feeling a little more confident that he could do this.

As soon as Jason sat in David's office, David looked at him, smiled and asked, "Well, how did it go?"

"It went great. The formula works."

"I'm glad to hear that you had a good experience implementing the steps of the program. Did you feel any stress or anxiety?"

"You must be a mind reader. I had some anxious moments that I wasn't expecting. I enjoyed each session and felt the truth and effectiveness of them so the pit in my stomach took me by surprise."

"I'm not much of a mind reader but anxiety, stress and discomfort are part of the program. Don't get worried. Let me explain. I can probably best explain by mentioning a couple of my favorite

quotes. David read the first one:

"Comfort, that stealthy thing that enters the house a guest, and then becomes a host, then a master. And then it becomes a tamer, and with a hook and whip it makes puppets of your larger desires."

-- Kahlil Gibran, Poet, Visual Artist

"I like this quote because it lets us know if we're feeling too comfortable, we may not be accomplishing our larger desires. Have you ever discussed the notion of a comfort zone with anyone?"

"Sure, we talk about it all the time at work, about getting out of our comfort zones to talk to hard clients, deliver bad news, things like that."

David smiled and said "We have to get out of our comfort zones to achieve any worthy objective, especially if it involves overcoming a problem. The longer the problem has been with us, the greater the comfort zone we've developed around it and the more anxious we feel when we think about leaving that comfort zone.

"I think the following quote by Scott Peck illustrates it well. David pointed to the wall and read through the quote posted there:

> *"Problems do not go away. They must be worked through or else they remain, forever a barrier to the growth and development of the spirit...The truth is that our finest moments are most likely to occur when we are feeling deeply uncomfortable, unhappy, or unfulfilled. For it is only in such moments, propelled by our discomfort, that we are likely to step out of our ruts and start searching for different ways or truer answers."* – M. Scott Peck

"It's not addressing the comfort zone as plainly as I like to discuss it but it makes the point that discomfort is part of choosing a better way. Overcoming a long-held habit like viewing, although easier in this program than in most, still involves some discomfort.

Jason looked disappointed. "I guess I didn't realize that there would be some anxiety, given the steps you described."

"Let me tell you how powerful the stress, anxiety and discomfort can be for you."

"Do you mean how powerful it can be in causing me to view and do?"

"No, but I'm glad you brought it up. In the past, what was your reaction to stress, anxiety or discomfort?"

"I would often view and do. In fact, often is probably too mild a description. I can't think of too

many instances that viewing was not my answer to try to relieve stress."

"Did that solve your stress?"

"I guess not. I always thought it did but now that I think about it, the answer is no. I felt relief for a very short while, but the guilt, shame and all the other negative consequences we discussed before just added to the stress, actually making it bigger than it was before."

"This is the point of the power of stress, anxiety and discomfort. If you embrace them, welcome them and accept them as the temporary result of your new life of love, they can be a powerful ally. After a few short weeks of some mild stress, anxiety or discomfort, your comfort zone expands and the life of love starts to become your life.

"Let's talk about the comfort zone and the damage it can do in keeping you in the cycle of view and do.

"You mentioned a key point I would like to discuss in a little more depth. You said that viewing and doing actually made the stress 'bigger than it was before.' Here's how that cycle works: You feel stress, anxiety or discomfort, or maybe all three."

David interrupted himself, "Let's use another acronym for this: SAD: **S**tress, **A**nxiety, **D**iscomfort. It has a different meaning than sad so let's make sure we keep that in mind.

"Back to the cycle. In the past, when you felt SAD, you tried to get rid of the SAD by viewing and doing. The result of the viewing and doing was guilt, shame, other negative consequences, which made you feel more SAD. When you felt more SAD, you tried to get rid of it by viewing and doing, and on and on the cycle goes.

"Can you see how dealing with your feelings of SAD the way you dealt with them in the past put you in and kept you in the viewing and doing cycle?"

Jason sensed the truth of the cycle and recalled how he justified his past viewing by thinking, "I'm feeling so stressed out. Viewing is a better alternative than going out looking for sex or than getting mad at someone." That attitude only led to more stress so he was in the cycle. "Yeah. I can see how dealing with stress by viewing only keeps one in the viewing-doing, SAD cycle."

"Good, let's dive a little deeper. Feeling the SAD without doing something about it was not acceptable to you in the past. You felt SAD, then automatically, without thinking of consequences jumped into the viewing-doing, SAD cycle.

"What if, instead of seeking relief for the SAD, you decided to experience it fully without seeking relief? Let's look again at Scott Peck's quote, *'...our finest moments are most likely to occur when we are feeling deeply uncomfortable, unhappy, or unfulfilled. For it is only in such moments, propelled by our discomfort, that we are likely to step out of our ruts and start searching for different ways or truer answers.'*

"If we realize that feeling uncomfortable, unhappy, unfulfilled or feeling SAD is a precursor to 'stepping out of our rut' then we can embrace the SAD, instead of looking for ways to relieve it.

"This is the essence of the power of stress, anxiety and discomfort: **when we embrace these feelings, we experience growth outside of our comfort zone**. The power that comes from embracing the feelings of SAD puts us in the process of stepping out of our ruts.

"All we have to do is embrace the feelings of SAD and realize that we are changing for the better and that it's okay to feel SAD and not do anything about it. Realize that the feelings are temporary—they last just a few days or weeks until our comfort zone grows big enough to encompass them.

"So now when you feel SAD, take heart that you're stepping out of your rut, expanding your comfort zone and beginning the path towards the living a loving life."

Jason thought out loud, "I've never viewed stress quite this way before. It seems logical to embrace it and accept it as a normal part of expanding our comfort zones and stepping out of our ruts. It's a little like acknowledging and accepting the temptation but this time I'm acknowledging and accepting the feelings of SAD."

David agreed and started assigning Jason his homework.

Homework for the Power of Discomfort

1. **Embrace the feelings of Stress, Anxiety and Discomfort. Realize that they are helping you expand your comfort zone and step out of your rut. Also realize that they will diminish over the next few days and weeks. Repeat the following when you feel SAD, "I feel stress. I am okay with feeling it because I know that I'm expanding my comfort zone and stepping out of my rut on the way to living a loving life."**
2. **Continue to use the ACV card for any temptations. Don't fall into the trap of letting the temptation linger, but address it immediately by pulling out and reading the card.**

Chapter 11: Giving away your power with "SAPS"

"During our last session we talked about the power of stress, anxiety and discomfort (SAD) and how the often negative connotations of SAD can be misplaced. When we embrace them as part of our growth towards expanding our comfort zone, then they can be powerful allies.

"You often experienced other emotions that led you to view and do in the past. Today, we're going to talk about how the tying of these feelings and emotions to viewing and doing is a lie and takes away your power. We're then going to discuss how to get that power back.

"First, we are going to discuss the four main ways we give our power to viewing and how we can take that power back. Some of what we cover may sound familiar. We've alluded to a few of the concepts but just haven't pointed them out as clearly as we will today. Along with pointing them out, we'll explain how to take the power back from them.

"Before we move on to the four power-takers, let's do an exercise. It may get a little personal, but I think you'll find it worthwhile.

"Jason, please think about the last several times you succumbed to the temptation to view pornography. What were the feelings you had just prior to being tempted and prior to succumbing?"

Jason thought briefly. "Stress, anger primarily at Becky, ravenous but not for food – you know what I mean, boredom, depression, deprived of sex or just nothing at all. I'm sure there are a lot of others but those are the ones that come to mind."

"Do you agree with the following statement: 'The reason you reached for pornography when you felt this way is because you initially chose to act and react that way.'"

"I think so. I feel like my choice has been taken away in the past. I would resolve to stop but then would still view next time. That makes it feel less like a choice. But I'm pretty sure the first time I chose to view and do as a response to any of those feelings, it was my choice."

"Once you made that first choice and then chose subsequently, whether consciously or not, to repeat the viewing and doing, it became a natural response. I'm, glad you realize that you're responsible and if you blame the stress, anger, boredom, depression, etc. for your choosing to view pornography, then you give your power away.

"One of the greatest ways to retain power is to take complete responsibility for our choices. One of the greatest ways to lose power is to blame something or someone else.

"Whenever you start thinking about the reasons you have given yourself in the past for viewing pornography, recognize that they are not valid reasons. You've trained yourself to view pornography when you experience those feelings."

David wrote 'Take Responsibility for our Choices and Actions' on the whiteboard.

Take Responsibility for our Choices and Actions

"Now, let's move on to the big four. We discussed in a prior session how resisting the temptation does not work. The temptation struggles for life and attention until we acknowledge and accept it. This is a key principle in understanding the four power-takers. They are similar in effect to resisting.

"In addition to trying to resist the temptation in the past, you've likely tried to suppress it instead of acknowledging and accepting it. **Suppression** is the first of the big four power-takers. It works similarly to resisting and has similar results, meaning it doesn't work.

Jason thought he knew the answer to his question but asked it to make sure, "What is the difference between resisting and suppressing?"

David replied, "The difference in impact and result is very similar but there is a difference. Some people really fight against the temptations, resisting them with a fighting spirit. Others tend to not want to fight but feel guilty and afraid of succumbing to the temptation so they try to not think about it or try to suppress the thought. I hope that makes sense."

"Sure. I see the small difference but I also see how they are very similar in result."

"What we try to suppress, struggles for our attention until it receives it. It can receive it by acknowledging and accepting or by succumbing to it.

"Suppressing the temptation does not work because we're abdicating responsibility for dealing with it or thinking that it will eventually go away if we try to ignore or passively suppress it. We know that if we don't deal with it, it will hang around until we succumb to it. We'll represent Suppression with the first "S" in our SAPS acronym.

David wrote "Tried and True Failure Paths: The Power-Takers." Underneath it he wrote "Suppress the temptation or emotion preceding the temptation."

Tried and True Failure Paths, The Power-Takers:

1. Suppress the temptation or emotion preceding temptation

"Let's move on to the second power-taker. Some of the feelings you listed before you chose to view pornography would be identified by some professional therapists as trigger emotions. Many of these professionals would recommend that you avoid the actions, circumstances, or places that would lead to these emotions. Have you heard this before?"

"I've heard of triggers before and have tried to stay away from things that cause boredom and stress because I thought they tend to trigger my choosing viewing and doing."

David smiled when he heard the word choosing.

Jason continued, "I even read that HALT is an acronym for some triggers. I believe it stands for Hungry, Angry, Lonely and Tired. Whenever you feel these emotions or feelings, then you should be on guard that you may slip. I think there is a lot of truth to it.

"I've been counseled before to not put myself in situations where I'll feel hungry, angry, lonely or tired. Most of the counsel has been to occupy my time with worthwhile and wholesome activities so that the HALT feelings are kept at bay.

"Just recently, I heard a new acronym." Jason knew David liked acronyms. "BLAST stands for Bored, Lonely, Angry, Stressed and Tired. I think these circumstances can be triggers as well and can result in viewing and doing.:

David seemed to ignore Jason and stated, "Let me tell you a little about triggers. The very act of **avoiding** the triggers and their temptations that follow takes power from you and gives it to your pornography viewing. Do you really think you'll always be able to avoid being hungry, angry, lonely, tired, bored or stressed?"

Jason was a little shocked by this. He expected David to tell him to recognize his triggers and to avoid them and the circumstances that normally cause them. "I haven't thought about that but I guess you're right. Now that I think about it, these feelings and situations are part of living so probably can't always be avoided. And if they can't be avoided all the time, what do I do?"

"Before we discuss the answer to your question, let's add another dimension to avoiding triggers. In addition to the known triggers, when we're addicted, new triggers and associated temptations will pop up unexpectedly. Or trigger circumstances will be bigger than us and thus unavoidable."

"Now, let's answer your question about what to do about triggers. Problems don't get solved by avoiding them. They get solved by confronting them. When you try to avoid the triggers and their associated temptations or try to avoid the temptations directly, you aren't dealing with them so they only get bigger the next time they arise. And they will arise again."

David turned to the white board and wrote "2. Avoid triggers and temptations."

Tried and True Failure Paths, The Power-Takers:

1. Suppress the Temptation
2. Avoid Triggers and Temptations

"Don't get me wrong. I don't mean that you should deliberately subject yourself to triggers and temptations. I just mean that unless you learn to confront and deal with them, you'll eventually fail at living a loving life.

"In addition, avoiding triggers and their associated temptations, especially the image ones, is becoming less and less practicable. The scantily clad women models are on billboards, shown in television commercials and are becoming more and more brazen and more and more acceptable. Nudity is becoming more acceptable on television, especially late-night television. And you know how easy it is to stumble upon it on the internet.

"In many cases, avoiding these types of triggers is virtually impossible. So, avoiding triggers and temptations doesn't work and is also not practicable. You've learned how to deal with them in a healthy, head-on way that works.

"Let's move on to the next popular way of trying to battle viewing and doing, as well as many other addictions, which is destined to fail.

"One reason I switched to attending 12-step meetings sponsored by the church I attend is they don't allow smoking on their premises. I am not a smoker and have always been bothered that so much smoking goes on at some of the meetings. I think that many alcoholics traded their alcohol addiction for a smoking addiction. I don't want to pass judgment on them because I think alcohol destroys lives more completely and more quickly than smoking but I think they give too much of their power away."

"What do you mean?"

"When we substitute one addiction for another, we're postponing our problem, just like avoiding. We're not dealing directly with the temptation but just substituting another action to satisfy it. **Substitution** merely gives the temptation more power and that power is taken directly from us."

"I understand the alcoholic substituting tobacco but I'm not sure how and what I substitute for pornography."

"Let me give you an example. I've heard some mis-interpretations of how to use scriptures or sacred music. I believe some ecclesiastical leaders have suggested that using scripture verses or thinking of an uplifting hymn or song, even singing or humming it to yourself can be a way of overcoming a temptation to view pornography. I believe that if this becomes part of your vision and you remember to exercise your choice, then it can be effective. There is power in hymns and scripture.

"But if you merely substitute reciting a song in your mind for the temptation, the temptation hasn't been dealt with and will come back. You may experience temporary relief but haven't fundamentally dealt with the temptation. "

Jason was puzzled. "I'm not sure I completely understand but I'm beginning to. I've actually

tried substituting a hymn for the temptation. It is usually a battle. I hum or sing the hymn in my mind, willing the temptation to go away. The temptation battles to come back and if the hymn wins, it seems to be a temporary win. The temptation is still just under the surface and tends to come back pretty quickly. Then the battle starts all over again and eventually, at least for me, the temptation wins."

"So Jason, you've experienced the problem with substitution first hand. You may win temporarily but when the temptation hasn't been dealt with directly it lingers and comes back often and more powerfully than before."

David turned to the white board and wrote "Substitute another thought or action."

Tried and True Failure Paths, The Power-Takers:

1. Suppress the Temptation
2. Avoid Triggers and Temptations
3. Substitute another thought or action.

"Substitution is a common practice that doesn't work. Can you think of other ways you may have tried to use substitution in the past?"

Jason thought for a moment before stating, "One of the programs I examined seemed to rely wholly upon substitution. The goal was to fill up my life with so many activities, primarily exercise and "good-for-you" activities, that I wouldn't have time or attention available for the temptation.

"I think exercise is good for you but it didn't keep me away from falling to the temptation. I also tried meditating, scripture reading, prayer, reading uplifting literature and many other things. I can't argue with most of them; they're good for you but I can confirm your statement: Substitution doesn't work. None of them worked for me for longer than a week or two.

"By the way, you skipped the "P" in "SAPS." Did you forget one?"

"It looks like I got them a little out of order. Maybe I was just seeing if you were paying attention." They both laughed.

"Let's get the "P" on the board." David erased the last statement on the board and then wrote 'Rely upon external "Protection." He then rewrote "Substitute another thought or action" beneath it.

Tried and True Failure Paths, The Power-Takers:

1. Suppress the Temptation
2. Avoid Triggers and Temptations
3. Rely upon external Protection
4. Substitute another thought or action.

"Now that we have that straightened out, let's talk about protection. Have you put filters on your computer and tried putting your computer in a public place or even cut off your internet access before in order to try to quit viewing?"

Jason thought about the many filters he had tried and bypassed and the moving of the computer. It seemed to work temporarily but the computer was easy to move back or even when it was placed in a high-trafficked area of the house no one stayed up as late as he did when he wanted to view.

"I've tried many ways to protect myself from internet pornography, all of the ones you mentioned plus some others."

"How have they worked out for you?" David asked.

Jason half smiled. He didn't like recalling the memory of having failed at so many things but recalled the question as being similar to the Dr. Phil-like question from a previous session. "Not so well."

"Sometimes the protections can provide temporary relief from viewing but they also mask dealing with the temptation. It seems that there are almost always ways around the protections. In fact, some men go on binges when they travel, watching a lot of porn as they let loose the pent up temptations that they haven't dealt with. The binges will bring back all the negative consequences that they were trying to forsake.

"Others find very ingenious ways to overcome the protections they set up, using work computers or friend's computers, even buying their own private laptop or asking the neighbor to use their wireless connection while theirs is "temporarily" down. I've heard many excuses my clients have given for needing to borrow someone else's computer or just using it when that person is away from it.

"Many of my recent clients used their smartphones or tablet computers to do their viewing. I was also surprised to hear that many public libraries are sources for pornography. With all the kids accessing the library's computers, I thought they would have filters, but many are foregoing or even removing filters to avoid the appearance of censorship, wrongly placed concerns in this instance if you ask me. My guess is that as new types of protection arise, new ways to thwart them will arise as well.

"Are you saying that I should remove the internet filters from my computer?" Jason asked incredulously.

"No," David smiled, "I'm not asking you to do anything like that at all. I think the protections are important for our families, especially our children and others who may be using our electronics. We don't want to risk exposing others to pornography on our computers, phones or televisions.

"In fact, when you're offered free HBO or other movie channels as part of a cable or satellite

promotion, turn it down. You're not the only one who accesses your computers or televisions.

"The point is that the protections will not work for you. You'll find ways around them or alternatives to satisfy the lingering temptation. They don't work because they don't deal with the temptation directly. When you start relying upon suppression, avoidance, protections or substitution, the temptation hasn't been dealt with and will win eventually.

"Do you have any questions about how suppression, avoidance, protections and substitution all prevent you from living a loving life?"

"Before Jason could answer, David continued, "This is often brand new and the opposite of what many people believe before they start the program. There is a lot of power that we give away and the big four power-takers, along with resisting, are the common ways we do so."

Jason paused, and then stated, "You're right. The concepts are brand new to me. I thought that the only way to deal with the temptations was to avoid them. I've also substituted and tried protections as well and I've discovered first hand that they don't work."

"I like to use the acronym SAPS to help me remember and recognize that Suppression, Avoidance, Protection and Substitution don't work because they don't effectively deal with the temptation. I like to think that the use of these methods 'SAPS' one's power. Maybe this acronym will help you remember to deal with the temptation, not suppress, avoid, protect or substitute from it.

"We're almost done." David turned to the board and wrote 'Do it for Yourself.'

Tried and True Failure Paths, The Power-Takers:

1. Suppress the Temptation
2. Avoid Triggers and Temptations
3. Rely upon external Protection
4. Substitute another thought or action.
5. **Do it for Yourself**

"Others in your life will naturally benefit when you succeed at living a loving life but viewers experience the most success when they do this for their own benefit, not for others' benefit, even for those closest to them. If they seek to do this to satisfy someone else or to mainly provide benefits for someone else, their chances for success go down. For long-lasting change, do it for yourself.

"As your recall, we talked about your vision statement before and the importance of having it be *your* vision with *your* benefits, neither for others nor for their benefit. You made a minor tweak in your vision statement that made it more for you than for your family, which was a good thing. No matter how altruistic you try to be, especially with your family, when you try to overcome such powerful addictions like viewing and doing, you need to do it for yourself. One related point: You can't make someone love you, and you lose some of the power that comes from doing this for yourself

if you expect it."

"We're out of time but let's go over your homework."

Homework for Giving Away your Power with SAPS:

1. **Write your vision and read it to yourself five times. Modify it if necessary.**
2. **Write down the way you have used SAPS: Suppression, Avoidance, Protections and Substitution to avoid dealing with the urges to view. Note in your writing why each one of them does not work.**
3. **Read the ACV card for every viewing and/or doing temptation.**
4. **Continue using "choose" instead of "must," "have to" or any other "force" language.**
5. **It's time to remind yourself of the consequences of viewing and doing. Write your top five negatives and positives and state them (out loud if possible, but at least out loud in your mind if not) while you write them.**

Chapter 12: Why do we view Pornography?

When Jason arrived at David's home that afternoon, he felt stressed. He felt guilty leaving early from the office despite having a very productive day. He felt guilty that Becky didn't know he was coming here and he felt like he needed to be home with his kids. Not to mention, the increased pressure of tax filing deadlines at the end of the week for his clients.

It was during times like these in the past that he felt viewing pornography would provide some stress relief. He had a clearer view of the consequences of his pornography viewing now and also a vision to choose as an alternative. He also practiced embracing the stress to grow beyond his current comfort zone. But embracing or not, he still felt the stress of his current circumstances.

After exchanging greetings, David suggested that they get right to work. "We're going to talk about why we view pornography and about some of the rationalizations that we've used in the past to justify our use. Last time we talked about some of the reasons we viewed pornography. Let's dive a little deeper this time."

"But before we start, how many times have you seen your "vision" in your mind since we last left?"

Jason thought, "Probably six or seven."

"That's good. Six or seven is good but eight to ten is a little better. When your vision becomes your focus, your power over pornography increases tremendously. Tonight, to help make your vision more real, please find a picture that depicts your vision. You may find it in some family pictures, in a magazine or on the internet. Once you have the picture, please print it and display it in a place where you'll see it every day. Some people like to post it on their bathroom mirror."

"Okay," Jason responded. "I think the more I focus on the vision, the greater my chances of achieving it. I like the bathroom mirror idea. I think I'll also find one to put near my computer at home"

"Great. Moving on, let's make a list." David turned to the familiar white board and started writing. **Reasons Why**. "Why do you think you viewed pornography in the past?"

Reasons Why:

Jason had been thinking about this since the last session and had come up with some even better reasons. "I believe that my sex drive is much stronger than my wife's. When she turns me down or we're too distant from each other for me to approach her, I need another outlet for my stronger sex drive."

David listed **Strong sex drive** and **Need more than spouse provides**.

Reasons Why:

- Strong Sex Drive
- Need more than spouse provides

"OK. What else?"

"I guess when I see a beautiful woman in person or on TV, I'll sometimes get aroused and desire to view pornography."

David added **Beautiful Woman Trigger** to the list.

Reasons Why:

- Strong Sex Drive
- Need more than spouse gives
- Beautiful Woman Trigger

"As we discussed last time, I've often turned to pornography as a stress reliever. When I feel stressed out, a bit like I'm feeling now, I'll sometimes view pornography to try to escape. I know it doesn't work based on our last discussion but it's been a primary reason in the past."

David added **Relieve Stress, Feel pleasure**, and **Get relief** to the list.

Reasons Why:

- Stronger sex drive
- Need more than spouse gives
- Beautiful Woman Trigger
- Relieve Stress
- Feel pleasure
- Get relief

Jason continued. "Sometimes I just feel like I need it. I can't go to sleep without viewing and can't relax. Other items that come to mind are the ones we covered last time, like feelings of boredom, anger, depression/sadness, or just feeling numb."

David commented, "I'm sorry about your current stress levels Jason. We'll talk about that today." He then wrote **Need it, Relieve Boredom, Outlet for Anger, Help for Depression, Help for Sadness** and **Try to stop feeling numb**.

Reasons Why:

- Strong sex drive
- Need more than spouse gives
- Beautiful Woman Trigger
- Relieve stress
- Relax
- Feel pleasure
- Get relief
- Need it
- Relieve Boredom
- Outlet for Anger
- Help for Depression
- Help for Sadness
- Try to stop feeling numb

Then he crossed out "Reasons Why" and replaced it with "Rationalizations." "One of the requirements for overcoming pornography is to make sure we're telling the truth about our viewing. The reasons listed for viewing pornography are commonly listed by others but are still rationalizations. Another word for rationa*liez*ation is lie."

Jason was a little stunned by referring to his well-thought reasons as lies. David sensed Jason's surprise and suggested. "Why don't we cover why these are lies in a little more depth?"

"One way I like to use to combat my tendency to rationalize is to weigh the costs of the result to determine if the rationalization has any truth to it. For example, if I rationalize viewing because I have a strong sex drive that needs to be satisfied, I'm saying that the satisfaction of my sex drive is more important than the consequences of viewing. Does that make sense?"

"Makes sense to me. The act of choosing consequences helps me realize it now more than before. Also, having gone through the research of negative consequences helps me see the high cost of viewing and doing more directly than before. In other words, I think it helped me add the appropriate weight to the costs of viewing."

"Great. Let's move on. The biggest lie may be that relief equals happiness. We've already clarified the consequences of viewing pornography and that viewing to relieve stress results in more stress. When you view pornography to attain relief, the relief comes at a high cost: the killing of what is most important to you. Viewed in this light, it's clear that not only is temporary relief not happiness, it is the opposite: misery. Do you agree?

"I had not thought about it this way before beginning P.O.P. but now I believe it wholeheartedly because I've experienced it. The relief comes at a very high price that is not worth paying.

"Let's go through a few of the other items on the list to illustrate. Strong sex drive. I don't know the exact science but I believe it's more or less a fact that men have a stronger sex drive than women

with individual exceptions of course. When we rationalize that this justifies us viewing pornography, then we say that our strong sex drive has to be satisfied at the cost of our self-confidence, ability to love, ability to have meaningful relationships, success on the job and happiness.

"Worth it or not?"

"Not." David crossed through 'Strong sex drive.'

"Not getting as much sex from our spouse as we desire seems similar to strong sex drives. When we satisfy our "need" for more sex than we can get from our spouse by viewing and doing, we in essence say, "Because I'm not having sex frequently enough, I'm going to take action that will shrink the love in my most important relationships, deaden my career and… you fill in the blanks with some of the negative consequences that you discovered in your research that matter most to you.

"Doesn't make much sense, does it?" David asked.

"You're right. Put in that light, it doesn't make much sense at all."

"Worth it or not?"

"Not." He crossed it off.

"Beautiful Woman Trigger. To see a beautiful woman and rationalize looking at pornography is to punish ourselves and deny our right to choose our reaction. He crossed it off.

"Relieve Stress. This is my favorite. Just to review, in the past when you sought to relieve stress by viewing pornography, how did you feel?"

"I felt some temporary relief followed by increased stress."

"How long did the temporary relief last?"

As Jason thought about this, he realized the relief lasted no more than several seconds. He softly said "Less than a minute."

"Then how and what do you feel after the "less than a minute" is up?"

As Jason reflected on the feelings of guilt, shame, low self worth, he stated, "Worse than before viewing and doing."

"Worse is a very non-specific word. My guess is that it includes all the items from your top 5 negative consequences list. Am I right?"

"I guess so."

“Do you have any other ways to describe the “worse” feeling without delving into the specifics?”

Jason didn’t understand but started thinking about other potential words when the word “stress” popped into his mind. As soon as he thought it, he blurted it out to David.

David smiled, “How cloudy do our consequences need to be for us to seek relief from stress by doing something that only adds to our stress?”

Jason had to repeat the question in his mind to get the full impact.

David continued “As you mentioned, the relief from stress is very temporary and then the stress itself is magnified. How is the stress magnified?”

Jason thought and responded quickly, “When I compound experiencing the consequences of viewing pornography on top of the stress I’m already feeling, it magnifies the stress.”

David smiled. “In fact, as we discussed, it can lead to a cycle of stress. Once the consequences of the viewing incident add to the stress, then a viewer feels the need to react to the stress and try to relieve it by doing what? Exactly, viewing and doing. This only adds more to the stress, and the downward cycle continues.

“I think the same can be said for seeking relief from the other negative emotions. When you react to depression or sadness by viewing pornography, you feel more depression and sadness. One of the consequences of viewing pornography that you clarified was lack of love, which can easily be interpreted as sadness. The response to the added sadness is more viewing, which leads to more sadness and the downward cycle continues on and on.

“I hope you can see that whenever we try to rationalize viewing pornography, we’re only lying to ourselves and preventing our realization of the benefits of living a loving life.” David proceeded to cross off the remaining items on the list.

Jason nodded in agreement but remained silent. He understood and agreed with David and David could sense it so they didn't discuss it further.

"Now that I've told you how our rationalizations are lies, let me provide a new list of feelings and you tell me if you've felt any of these feelings over the past 48 hours." David wrote a new list on the board: '**Irritated, Deprived, Angry, Sad, Anxious, Fearful, Nervous, Worried, Stressed, Bored, Aroused**.'

As Jason scanned the list, he started thinking out loud. "I know I've been feeling a little bit of fear. I've failed so many times in the past that, although my confidence is definitely growing with each temptation I deal with, I'm afraid that I may fail again."

David nodded as if he expected Jason to continue.

"I feel deprived when I think that I may never view again. But never viewing again is what success in the program means and I still have the desire to view pornography." I guess this gives me feelings of denying myself as well but I think those are normal feelings when you're trying to quit.

"I suppose I've also felt anxious and nervous. I'm used to viewing pornography almost every

night or whenever I want to and now that I'm not, I feel anxious."

David looked concerned with Jason's feelings, like he usually does when he's deeply listening. "Let's address some of these feelings. If left to fester and not dealt with directly, they can block your success."

"You've defined yourself as a pornography viewer. It's now embedded on your self- image. Changing that image can be scary. Whenever we seek to change our self image, we're redefining who we are and we feel fear, anxiety and discomfort.

"These feelings will probably last another two or three days before they begin to shrink and dissipate over the next few weeks as your comfort zone expands. I picked up a book a few years ago titled "Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway." I think that is a great motto to live by. Whenever we venture out of our comfort zone, especially when we try to change our definition of ourselves, we will feel fear. The realization that it is a short-term feeling should provide you with assurance that you're on track.

"The power of your vision and the clarity of the consequences will give you the strength to power through the feelings of fear and anxiety. Do you feel that it's worth feeling fear, anxiety and discomfort for a short period of time to be able to live a loving life?"

Jason asked, "I think it's worth it but if I imagine lifelong fear and anxiety, I'm not so sure. What I'm really saying is that I don't have the confidence that I can live with the discomfort for a long time without reverting back to viewing."

"Maybe I can help," David began. "I didn't explain the length of time you can expect these feelings. The fear, anxiety and discomfort are only temporary. You'll feel much less of them today and then each day you'll feel less of them as your comfort zone expands and your power increases.

"I suspect you'll be free of these feelings in three weeks and they'll begin diminishing well before then. Now that you have a better idea of the time frame of experiencing the fear, anxiety and discomfort do you feel that these temporary feelings are worth the positive consequences?"

Jason responded, "Now that you've explained it I think it's absolutely worth it. I still don't understand how these feelings diminish so quickly though."

"As you continue to exercise your power of choice and embrace the discomfort, you'll understand and experience firsthand how quickly the feelings diminish. Your comfort zone expands at a brisk pace."

I hope you'll also be willing to believe that you don't need to prove yourself right about failing. One of the prerequisites for success is to believe that you will be successful. Because you've failed in the past, this may not be the firm belief in success that you would like. I sense that as you're learning and understanding the concepts we're discussing, your confidence in yourself is increasing. I also sense that you are truly starting to believe that you'll succeed. Am I right?"

"Yeah. My perspective is changing and I'm growing more confident that I can do this."

"Good. Let's tackle some of the other thoughts and feelings.

"I'm glad you mentioned feeling deprived. It is one of the most common obstacles to success and one that requires repetition in order to combat. One of the keys and essential elements to this program is the freedom of choice. You are exercising your freedom to choose any time you face an urge or temptation."

"One of the failure paths is to believe that we only make the decision once and it applies to all future decision points. This one-time only decision and the thought process that follows it lead to the feelings of deprivation and denial. When you believe you will no longer ever be able to view and do, you naturally feel deprived.

"So continue to change the perspective and the process. In the future, when you decide to choose to live a loving life or to view pornography, you're choosing that action for one time for that instance only. It's not a lifelong choice but a momentary choice. You can choose differently the next instance.

"When you're free to choose to view pornography at any time, do you feel deprived?"

"No, Jason responded, "How can you feel deprived when you know you can view anytime you want?"

"Exactly. Let's explore this a little more.

"We've discovered that when you make a decision that lasts forever, you are using a form of force, compelling yourself to make the same decision tomorrow that you made today. I know this is review but the repetition is important. How do we typically act to being forced to do something?"

"I know I tend to rebel against it, even if I don't say anything."

"Right. We tend to rebel against actions that attempt to "force" us to do something. We've spent some time in the past session on using "force" language against ourselves so we won't touch on it here.

"When you don't give yourself the freedom to choose differently next time you're faced with temptation, you'll naturally feel deprived. When you are making your choice, make it for the current decision point only, realizing that you are always free to make a different choice next time.

"When you are free to make a different choice, you won't feel deprived or denied. You can always choose to view pornography at any moment in time, so you're not depriving yourself of anything. You're just making a choice.

"Some say that this contradicts the power of commitment but you'll find that the power of free choice empowers you and takes away feelings of depriving yourself or denying yourself. In fact, when you feel deprived, it can be very powerful and can negate your power to choose consequences.

"Sometimes we have to tell ourselves that no one or no circumstances can take away our freedom to choose. If we forget to remind our poor me, deprived, viewer/doer-mind that we always have a choice, we will feel like a victim and enter into the cycle that leads to relapse.

"How can you feel deprived knowing that you can always choose to view and do? The choice is up to you, always."

"Let me explain it a little differently. You don't feel deprived when you know you have a choice. You can always choose to view and do. When you realize you have the choice, you realize you're not depriving yourself at all but choosing this time to live a loving life, knowing that you can choose differently any time you want.

Jason understood most of what David explained but was glad that David had explained it twice. It was a new concept for Jason that needed to sink in a little. He always thought that one of the major reasons he failed at overcoming his pornography addiction was his lack of self-discipline.

Now, he felt that overcoming the addiction may not be about self-discipline at all but had everything to do with the freedom to choose. "Knowing that I can view pornography anytime I want actually feels more powerful than telling myself I must have the self-discipline to never view again."

David's eyes brightened. "I see that you used the words 'must' and 'self-discipline' in the same sentence. I think that calls for a MuHahaha laugh. David did his best impression of an evil-sounding MuHa laugh. Jason chuckled, thinking, "David is not very convincing when he tries to sound evil."

David continued. The laugh is not only for the MuHa lie but also for the "self-discipline" lie. Many people believe the reason for their viewing addiction is due to their own lack of self-discipline. This is laugh-worthy as well. It's not about self-discipline but about choice.

"Back to the power of choosing for just the current instance. One of the sayings I picked up from 12-step meetings was 'One day at a time.' The choice doesn't seem so daunting if we just have to do it today, knowing we can choose differently tomorrow. If we can get through today without our addiction, we'll deal with tomorrow when it comes. There is power to staying in the present instead of worrying about the future.

"I've modified the saying to fit my needs to 'One instance at a time.' We can choose differently every time we're faced with the choice. We don't have to choose for a whole day but just for this instance."

"So the next time you're feeling denied or deprived, tell yourself that you can choose to view any time you want to. Your choice to live a loving life and to experience your vision is for this instance only.

"The concept of free choice for this instance only is crucial to your success so we continued to emphasize it tonight. I can tell you're tired so let's call it a night. You now are armed with the heart of the program but you're not quite finished. There are a few important concepts and practices to cover to continue taking your power back from viewing and doing.

"Don't forget to do your homework. The main reason for the homework is not only to make sure you understand the concepts but to help them become a part of you and to prevent the clouds from coming back to your vision and to your list of negative and positive consequences."

Homework:

1. **Write down the 3 top reasons you've used in the past to justify viewing. Write down why they are lies.**
2. **Write down the feelings you have before you view and how these feelings change or are amplified after viewing.**
3. **Write down the following: I'm choosing for this instance only. I always have the right to choose differently. Repeat it five times.**

Note: *Please refer to* www.poweroverpornography/rationaliezations *to review a current list of rationaliezations of viewers. Please add some of yours to the list.*

Chapter 13: Repairing the damage to yourself

"Jason, I haven't asked specific questions about the genesis of your addiction and don't know how long you've struggled with it but I've seen that no matter the reasons why one started viewing or how long he or she's been viewing, there is damage to self-esteem, and confidence. There is also a perception of your true self as somewhat of a failure.

"Most viewers recognize this but I've worked with viewers who adamantly deny that their viewing has changed them, damaged their self-esteem and lessened their capacity to love. It's only after they experience the power of the program in practice that they realize how damaged they were.

"Now that you know how to live a loving life and have begun to do so, the negative emotions and feelings should be diminishing. I think you'll be pleased with the next part of the formula that can speed the process of reducing the negative and increasing the positive."

"I'm glad you mention how my confidence is growing. The changes are subtle and I don't really notice them until I take time to contrast how I felt and acted during the last few weeks with how I felt before that. I believe the increase in confidence and self-esteem is real but so far the changes are pretty small.

"I also have the contrasting experience of the six months of pornography sobriety after I completed the 12-step program. I realized during that relatively happy time that my self-image and important relationships all suffered while I was a viewer.

"But I'm a bit puzzled by your comment about perception of true self as somewhat of a failure. What do you mean?"

"I haven't encountered any viewer who didn't, deep-down, consider themselves a failure in stopping their viewing habit. Almost all viewers first try to stop in conventional ways, such as exercising self-discipline, installing filters on their computer, keeping their computer in a common area, and so on. They may experience abstinence for a few days, weeks or months but end up going back to viewing, thus failing in their attempts to stop viewing.

"The failures continue to cycle and take their toll by increasing shame and guilt while stealing self-esteem, confidence and value. The failure cycle causes viewers to begin to see themselves as failures because they don't have the power to stop viewing by themselves.

"When a viewer tries a 'program,' such as a 12-step program, and experiences initial success and confidence and then relapses, it can be a tough blow to their confidence and cause them to feel like a failure. They think, "If I can't even succeed at a program that is successful for others, there must be no hope for me.

"This is another lie that we want to help them confront so they can move forward in exercising their free choice to choose a loving life.

"Sometimes viewers rationalize that viewing is okay and they have many reasons to do it, from "my sex drive is stronger than my wife's" to "I'm not hurting anyone" to "it's natural" and "everyone does it." We've already discussed these lies. They don't help overcome the failure syndrome.

"Every viewer I've met realizes, some with strong knowledge but some just deep in their heart, that viewing is wrong and that their failure to stop is just that, a failure. It defines who they are. As they try to compartmentalize the failure just to viewing, it bleeds over to every other aspect of their lives, damaging relationships, impacting work performance, and all the other consequences you discovered in your research.

Now, with this background on the failure syndrome impacts of pornography let me get to the heart of the answer to your question about true self.

"I believe you came into this world as a strong, confident human being with divine attributes. But, through your viewing addiction and potentially through other relics of your growing up process, you lost a part of your true self, replacing the strength and confidence with failure, shame and selfishness, seeing the divine attributes drift to the far reaches of your mind and heart.

"Does this answer your question?"

Jason was touched. He believed that he was not capable of recovery before he met David. He recalled how dejected he was when he came back to the 12-step meeting just last month after failing. He now felt hope that he didn't need to keep failing. "Yeah, you answered it well."

"Let's turn to the supercharger of confidence, self-esteem and true self. Have you heard of affirmations?"

"I know what the word means but not sure what you mean."

"Affirmations are beliefs about who you want to become. When you recite affirmations, you recite attributes that you desire but may not have. In essence, you state your desired attributes to yourself as if they are already a part of you.

"You are telling your subconscious that you are the type of person you say you are. Your subconscious then works to make these affirmations come true.

"I generally don't believe in quick fixes or gimmicky answers to deep and hard problems but I've found that affirmations can form a firm success path for viewers. I think the inherent consequences of viewing, such as shame, guilt, self-loathing and inability to love deeply become imbedded into the self-image of the viewer.

"The best way to begin ridding yourself of this negative self-image is to live a loving life. I wish I could tell you that your self-image would change immediately but I've found that self-image changes slowly. One of the ways to help your self-image change a little more quickly is to use 'affirmations.' Your self-image impacts all areas of your life so we want to do anything we can to

change it quickly to that of one living a loving life. Does that make sense?"

"I think so but I'm not really sure what the affirmations are and how I go about using them to heal my damaged self image."

"The best way to explain what affirmations are may be through example. Here are some examples," David began writing as he spoke. The writing gave Jason a chance to dwell on each example to begin to understand affirmations and to see which ones resonated with him.

- I am a child of God
- I like myself
- I have all the good qualities and resources within me to fulfill my hearts desires.
- I am free to choose at all times
- I notice a calm and peaceful feeling in my body.
- The worth of my soul is infinite
- I am looking forward to all of the new experiences I shall have
- I am a loving person and lift the spirits of those around me.
- I welcome the feeling of discomfort that accompanies positive change
- I am worthy of being loved
- I feel terrific
- I treasure the relationships I have with my wife and children
- I forgive myself
- I am a builder of people
- Each action I take this day is my choice. Therefore, each decision I make is my responsibility.
- I have an excellent career
- I am prosperous
- I receive blessings abundantly and with gratitude
- I am open at all times to communication from others, and that communication leads me to a new level in clarity of understanding.
- I love my family deeply and reflect it in my actions.

"I know this violates my rule of five but I think you can get the gist of the affirmations process. Do you have any you would like to add, change or take off the list? Don't be too eager to remove them. You'll have a chance to narrow the list to the most important ones to you in a minute."

"That is a pretty good list. The only one that comes to mind that is not there is about healthy living. I haven't always taken the best care of my health but feel that it's an important part of self-esteem, at least for me.

"Oh, I also think my role as a father deserves to be separate from my role as a husband. They're the two relationships I value most so why don't we separate them? Now that I see the direct link between my effectiveness at being a good husband and father and living a loving life, I would like to list them separately."

"No problem. This is your list so we want to make it real for you. I've simply started the list to

give you some choices and help you see what an affirmation is.

David added, 'I live a healthy lifestyle,' 'I am a good husband,' and 'I am a good father' to the list.

Affirmations

- I am a child of God
- I like myself
- I have all the good qualities and resources within me to fulfill my heart's desires.
- I am free to choose at all times
- I notice a calm and peaceful feeling in my body.
- The worth of my soul is infinite
- I am looking forward to all of the new experiences I shall have
- I am a loving person and lift the spirits of those around me.
- I welcome the feeling of discomfort that accompanies positive change
- I am worthy of being loved
- I feel terrific
- I treasure the relationships I have with my wife and children
- I forgive myself
- I am a builder of people
- Each action I take this day is my choice. Therefore, each decision I make is my responsibility.
- I have an excellent career
- I am prosperous
- I receive blessings abundantly and with gratitude
- I love my family deeply and reflect it in my actions.
- I live a healthy lifestyle
- I am a good husband
- I am a good father

"The next step in your program is to select the five most meaningful affirmations and begin reciting them to yourself once per day. The rule of five applies now but your list of five affirmations is not permanent. You may want to change your five affirmations as your challenges change and as you change.

"Please go through the list and select the five most important ones to you as your homework. We don't always follow up on your homework but we'll plan to follow up on this one.

"One other thing I want to mention before you leave. Some self-esteem gurus would have you believe that daily affirmations are the end-all and be-all in improving your self-image. In fact, neglecting other aspects of building strong self-esteem will impede your progress despite using daily affirmations. We know there are many aspects of good self-esteem that are important, the primary one

being living a loving life. The other major aspects include the following."

David spoke as he wrote them on the board, "**Setting and achieving worthy goals, living your life congruently with your values, feeling gratitude on a daily basis, spending time with those you love, being present and focusing on the person/task at hand, and serving others."**

Essential Self-Esteem Builders:
• Setting and achieving worthy goals
• Living your life congruently with your values
• Feeling gratitude on a daily basis,
• Spending time with those you love,
• Being present and focusing on the person/task at hand
• Serving others

"We won't get into a lot of these other vital aspects of building your self-esteem, but know that they're important and please use them in your life. One thing to keep in mind concerning living life congruently with your values is to make sure your values are consistent with true and proven principles. Adopting values that are not in line with the truth will result in low self-esteem and limit your chances of happiness.

"Affirmations work. They help you change your thought patterns and begin building the self-image of one living a loving life. They are simple to implement. They begin increasing your self-esteem in a short period of time."

Homework for Undoing the Damage:

1. **Select and write down the 5 top affirmations that you will recite to yourself every day.**
2. **Select the same time of day to recite them and recite them every day.**
3. **Continue reciting the ACV card with every temptation. It's vital to do this every time you experience a temptation without exception.**
4. **Review the following list of other long-term, self-esteem builders and make a general plan to implement them.**
    a. **setting and achieving worthy goals**
    b. **living your life congruently with your values**
    c. **feeling gratitude on a daily basis**
    d. **spending deliberate, focused time with those you love**
    e. **being present and focusing on the person/task at hand**
    f. **serving others**
    g. **setting personal standards based upon universal truths**

Note: *Please refer to www.poweroverpornography/affirmations to review a larger list of affirmations. Please choose those most impactful to you. Please share some of your affirmations as well*

Chapter 14: Repairing your relationships

Jason woke up early Saturday morning. This was his sleeping in day but he refined his list of affirmations last night and still had 'good husband' and 'good father' on his mind. He decided to make breakfast.

Bailey usually awoke before he did. He smiled at the thought of her bouncing on the bed to wake them up on most Saturday mornings. She would be surprised to see him already awake.

As he tiptoed to the kitchen, he heard Bailey's door open. She was running towards his bedroom and was startled when she ran right into Jason. "Daddy? Where are you going?" She seemed worried that he was leaving.

Jason picked her up and hugged her. "I'm going with you to the kitchen. Do you want to help me make breakfast?"

Bailey was too excited to speak but just nodded her head and most of the rest of her body in an exaggerated up and down.

While Dad looked in the cupboards to get pancake flour, Bailey looked out the window. "Dad, I see a turtle."

Jason normally would go about his looking for items and utter "That's nice" but this time he looked out the window with Bailey and asked "Where?"

"Right there, in the big cloud right on top of the sky, silly."

Jason took Bailey outside. They identified cloud shapes for 30 minutes, sometimes sitting, sometimes laying on their backs. He couldn't remember laughing so much with Bailey, especially when she asked what a Scooby Doo was and Jason tried to explain.

David stared directly into Jason's eyes, and asked, "W-e-l-l?"

Jason knew he was referring to his homework from the last session so opened his notebook to show David his top five affirmations.

I am a child of God
I am free to choose at all times
I have an excellent career
I live a healthy lifestyle
I am a good husband
I am a good father

David looked at the list but before he could say anything, Jason defended his list, "I know there

are six items, not five, but I think the last two are close enough to one item to make it okay."

David nodded in agreement. "The rule of five is designed to help you focus and to also make you think about your highest priorities. I can tell you put some thought into your list of high priority affirmations so the rule accomplished that objective. I also don't see a problem, especially when it comes to affirmations, to having six affirmations instead of five.

"I like to use the rule of five on affirmation lists so that reciting the list is a quick exercise that can be fit into anyone's day. After you recite it a few times, you're also able to memorize it so that you can still recite it if you misplace the list.

"I think your six items fit the spirit of the rule. The big question is, "Do they resonate with you and when you recite them, do you feel your self-esteem and general well-being increase?"

Jason reacted, "I think so. I kept thinking about your statement last time that the list is not permanent so I plan to keep referring back to the longer list to make changes periodically. But right now, the list feels good to me.

"I have to admit that I thought it was a bit silly to recite these statements but I always smile and feel good after I do it so I think it actually may help. I noticed that they were all phrased in present tense and were 'being' statements for the most part instead of 'want-to-be' statements. I think there's something to that."

David smiled. "The affirmations have less impact if they're phrased as goals or 'want-to-be' statements. Your viewing and doing have negatively changed your self-image and self-esteem at the brain level. We need to convince the subconscious part of your brain that you are healing so that it does not revert back to the 'failure' self-image of the viewer and doer.

"When I first encountered affirmations as a way to improve my life, I had the same reaction that you did. 'What good will it do for me to say the same things to myself every day?' But I'm glad I didn't let the skeptic win. It's made a tremendous difference in my life in more ways than just correcting the viewing and doing damage.

"I was able to change my self-image to one of a confident, loving person more quickly than I could have otherwise. I'm glad you relaxed your inner skeptic so you can feel the power and the healing that comes with them.

"I encourage you to recite them daily and to refine and change them periodically. I hope you find them as powerful in your life as I've found them in mine.

"I want you to know that your self-image and self-esteem power your attitude, achievement and ability to care for yourself and others. We did not spend much time going over the other, long-term self-esteem builders but please take them seriously and make them part of your everyday life. As you do so, your self-image will change and your self-esteem will grow.

"If we expanded our discussion of the self-esteem builders to the level they deserve, then our P.O.P. program would become a self-esteem program. We'll save that for another day," David chuckled. "Today, we're going to focus on some simple things you can do to repair your relationship with Becky."

"Speaking of full programs, we could design and teach an entire course on relationship building but we at least want to provide you with some simple helps in rebuilding your relationship with your spouse. These tips are not the whole solution but they are a start.

"But before we discuss rebuilding your relationship, let's talk about temptations. Are you experiencing the same number of temptations per day now versus when you first started the ACV process?"

"No, I'm still experiencing temptations to view and do, sometimes separately, but I probably am only tempted 4-5 times per day now. It seems like I'm making progress."

Jason was surprised that David didn't greet his answer with more enthusiasm.

"That is what I suspected may be happening," David said matter-of-factly. "You're not practiced enough to thrive with only 4-5 temptations per day. This process takes practice and I think you need some more."

"What do you mean more? I am dealing with each temptation as it comes using the ACV card. I thought it was a good thing to have fewer temptations per day."

"I mean I think you need more temptations per day so you can keep practicing. We'll talk about it in the next module, but practice is what keeps us sharp and helps us make new areas of SAD (stress, anxiety and discomfort) into automatic reactions. It takes a lot of practice to master anything, including living a life of love."

"You don't think I should make up temptations for myself do you?" Jason asked dismissively.

"That's exactly what I would like you to do. You need practice dealing with temptations 8-10 times per day. Remember to create temptations to get the total up to 8-10. I know it seems counter-intuitive to create temptations but if you don't get enough practice, relapse becomes more likely."

"Seems a little strange to me but so have many of the other parts of the course at first. Then they worked like magic. I'll continue to trust in the program and create my own temptations to ensure I'm practicing the ACV process 8-10 times per day. I'm not sure I'll be able to keep creating so many temptations every day forever though. It seems like it could get tedious."

"The purpose of creating your own temptations is to practice acknowledging and accepting them, exercising your power to choose, and then choosing your vision. Make sure you immediately start the ACV process once you create your temptation. Each time you do, your practice makes it easier and more automatic to use the same process for each future temptation.

"You won't need to create that many temptations every day forever. Just for the next few weeks. We'll get into the long-term practice in the next session. I think you'll like the low-maintenance nature of the long-term practice.

"Now, let's get back to relationships.

"When the relationship with your spouse is truly in tatters, we recommend professional counseling to help. What we'll cover next is not comprehensive and not designed for repairing deeply troubled relationships. I don't get the sense that your relationship with Becky is in deep trouble but only you and she can tell for sure. As you assess your relationship with your wife and as she provides you feedback about it, please seek professional counseling if you feel it will help.

One of the common responses we hear when we teach this module is: 'our relationship is fine, it doesn't need rebuilding.'

"I know you've discussed with me how you realize the drifting apart that you and Becky have experienced is due to your viewing. Realization is the first step to taking responsibility so you can begin to make changes. This is a big first step and you should feel good that you've taken it.

"You've already made the biggest change towards helping your relationship with your wife by starting on the path to living a loving life. When you are no longer a viewer/doer, you become transformed; you become more capable of loving, are more able to see your wife's beauty again and have a greater desire to love her.

"Transformed may be too strong of a word but I think it is appropriate. Let me explain. Often, the changes in the love you feel and the emotions you feel toward your spouse happen gradually. Sometimes viewers don't notice the negative feelings caused by viewing until they look back over a several-month time frame to see the state of their feelings, lack of love in their life and negative feelings directed towards their spouse.

"Once they see the contrast of their viewer life versus their loving life, they notice the transformation. Once you see the transformation, it's easier to recognize that small changes to your relationship skills don't amount to much without the changes to you and your viewing and the inside out transformation that the ACV process brings.

"Now that you know and are beginning to experience the most important change, that of living a loving life, let's discuss ways you can increase the pace of rebuilding your relationships in other ways. We'll focus the discussion on intimacy, not just physical but a real intimate relationship with your wife.

"Intimacy is vital to reclaim if you want to rebuild your relationship with your wife. Why? When you are a viewer, you build a false intimacy with pornography and the images you see. This false intimacy prevents you from feeling real intimacy with your spouse.

"It takes effort to re-establish the real intimacy. We've found that there are steps you can take to re-establish it more quickly and on a solid foundation. Let me cover some of those steps with you next.

David began writing as he spoke, "As Patrick Carnes said, True intimacy is formed over years of trust, respect, kindness, affection. He also noted that intimacy is an integral part of your recovery. [ii]"

> **True intimacy is formed over years of trust, respect, kindness and affection**
>
> **Intimacy is an integral part of your recovery. It is more than just physical.**

"The key is to develop a new "healthy" model of intimacy that incorporates more than the physical. This is something that, of course, you can't do alone but need to involve your spouse. Speaking of involving your spouse, let's pause and discuss a difficult but important part of repairing your relationship.

"As you know, P.O.P. is designed to work without initial spousal involvement. I worry about this aspect of the program and wanted to tell you why. Scientific comparisons of the success of pornography addiction treatment programs, mostly 12-step programs, show that there is greater and longer lasting success when spouses are involved.

"When spouses are told about the problem and are involved in the recovery, success rates are higher. I believe that P.O.P. will experience the same increase in success rates when spouses are involved.

"The reason we don't involve spouses in P.O.P. at the beginning is that the fear of disclosure to spouse keeps many viewers from seeking help. We want to help as many viewers as possible so we haven't made spousal involvement an initial component of the program.

"I now want to revisit this with you for three reasons. The first reason I just mentioned to you. The science shows greater success with disclosure in other treatment programs. I believe that P.O.P. will be similar: you will see greater success if you disclose your past viewing/doing to your spouse.

"The second reason is the ethical responsibility we have to our spouse to be transparent. If we're still hiding something in our past, it may be difficult to connect on a deep level.

"Marriage and serious dating relationships depend upon honesty and trust. When we choose not to disclose our past viewing and doing, we're keeping secrets that fracture the honesty and trust. Often, the viewer's spouse can believe that it's his or her fault that the relationship is rocky and deep love is absent. Correcting this perspective just seems like the right thing to do.

"I like the way Mark Butler, a PhD Family Therapist specializing in treating pornography addiction put it. Butler states that authenticity in a relationship is vital for the intimacy of the

relationship.

"His research explains that 'withholding disclosure in a marriage relationship can bring about a fragmented relationship …When pair-bond partners relate through the remaining fragments of themselves — not willing to be fully, intimately known — or mask their authentic self behind false personas, the relationship becomes a stage façade of intimacy rather than a real-life enactment of intimacy,' Butler said[iii].

"The third reason is spiritual in nature. Disclosure results in healing that happens more quickly and more completely. Your disclosure to me and to the head of your congregation help but repentance and the associated healing is still incomplete without disclosing and apologizing to the person harmed by your actions. In this case, that person would be Becky.

"We're all about the power of personal choice so the decision to disclose is up to you. I just wanted you to know some of the positive consequences that we believe result from disclosure. Although the reactions of spouses are hard to predict, we believe that the benefits of disclosure outweigh the potentially negative response in most cases. I also wanted you to know that we view it as important and hope that you'll consider it in the future as you work on improving your relationship with Becky."

"Okay," Jason answered nervously, "but I still don't know how she would react. I think I probably would have quit P.O.P. early if I thought a key part of it was involving her. I feel greater love for her as a result of P.O.P. but I'll have to work up to disclosing my addiction to her."

David responded, "That is a common response. I just want you to keep an open mind to it. Part of reigniting the intimacy in your marriage is being honest with your spouse. When you're holding back a major part of your past that impacted her life and her relationship with you, it may be more difficult to rebuild your relationship.

"I want to see you succeed with P.O.P. so consider sharing your past with your wife to enhance your success chances. Although the initial reaction can be hard to predict, revealing your own battles and vulnerabilities can bring you closer together. Will you consider it?"

"I understand how it can be helpful but I still think I may need some time to work up to it."

"Okay. Please let me know before you discuss it with her and I can provide some tips that may help. Let's move on in our discussion of improving your intimate relationship with Becky.

"One of the keys in developing healthy intimacy is to create a joint vision of intimacy: What do you (both/each of you) want sexual intimacy to be like in your marriage?"

"This means you need to discuss the kind of relationship, including the sexual relationship, you want to have as a couple. If you don't talk, you won't be able to experience true intimacy. Now, if you're like me, these can be difficult conversations so here are some ways to start them.

"I would often start conversations about intimacy with my wife by sincerely expressing my love to her, then state something along the lines of, 'Intimacy is an important part of us feeling close to each other' followed by asking, 'How do you feel we're doing as a couple with intimacy?'

"Once you open the conversation, continue asking questions. 'What do you think we should change?' 'What can I do better?' What kind of sexual relationship do you desire and expect?'

"Just having this conversation with your spouse without an agenda and without a motive to make her feel guilty, will be a way of rebuilding your relationship. But don't be disappointed if it doesn't go as planned. The many years of low trust, respect, kindness and affection often mean that some rebuilding time needs to happen before the conversation about intimacy goes well.

"An additional impediment to this conversation is the false sense of intimacy that viewing and doing gave you. It has been an escape from real-life intimacy and will take some time to turn around. So, how do you help this conversation, and others to follow, happen and produce true intimacy? David turned to the white board and began writing.

1. **Risk being first**. When you accept the risk of rejection and are revealing of your internal struggles, you create trust and open up the ability to discuss joint problems. This is a big step that actually helps you heal. You can't maintain a viewer mind while revealing your deep thoughts and struggles. According to Patrick Carnes, "In healthy relationships, intimacy becomes possible when people accept the risk of rejection and reveal their internal struggles. [iv],,
2. **Be a listener first and a talker sec**ond. It's important that your focus be on the conversation. Your past viewing and doing causes you to want to focus on almost anything but your spouse and the conversation. Choose to keep your focus on her. Listening *fully* is one of the great esteem and relationship builders and a key to rebuilding real intimacy.

Jason agreed but was puzzled. "What do you mean when you say fully? I think I'm a good listener but maybe I need some help."

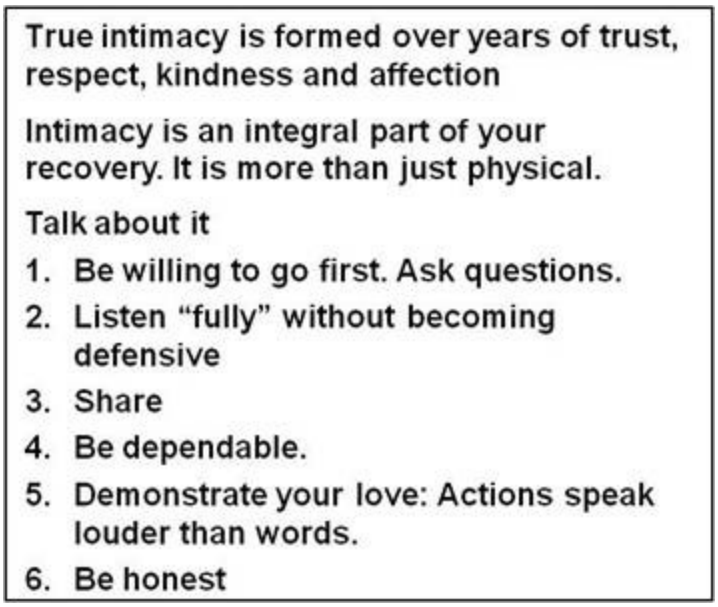
"You know you're fully listening when no other thoughts come into your mind not pertinent to the conversation (or if they do, you choose to refocus on just listening), you are not putting together your response in your mind while your spouse is still talking and you notice emotions and body language in addition to just her voice.

"There is a lot more to listening (again, we could spend a whole course on just this topic) but the three tips we just mentioned, (1) no other irrelevant thoughts while listening, (2) no forming your response while the other is talking and (3) notice emotions and body language along with voice in understanding the words and the emotion behind them, will put you most of the way there.

2. To continue on listening, **avoid becoming defensive**. Your viewer/doer mind will revert to the shame and guilt of the addiction. The ensuing low self-esteem will want you to be defensive. When you have the defensive thought come into your mind, choose to listen instead. Withdrawal

is another defense mechanism as well so watch for it and stay engaged.

3. **Share**. The hiding mentality of the viewer/doer means you haven't practiced sharing as much. Begin sharing your thoughts and feelings more. Keeping them inside of you can inhibit intimacy. You may want to write thoughts and feelings down during the day that you can share with your spouse later.
4. **Be dependable**, even for hard things. A natural consequence of viewing/doing is to be less dependable and to avoid taking on or accomplishing difficult tasks. You'll naturally feel more dependable and willing to take on harder tasks as you start living a loving life. But trust starts with dependability so emphasize this. Remember, that there are few if any tasks, appointments or urgent meetings that are a higher priority than your spouse and children.
5. **Demonstrate your love**. Words are less powerful than actions. Plan date nights each week with your spouse and plan them around what you know she likes to do. Think about little actions that will mean a lot to her. This will mean a great deal in showing your commitment and will lead to greater marital intimacy.
6. **Be honest**. Honesty is a key to intimacy.


True intimacy is formed over years of trust, respect, kindness and affection
Intimacy is an integral part of your recovery. It is more than just physical.
Talk about it
1. Be willing to go first. Ask questions.
2. Listen "fully" without becoming defensive
3. Share
4. Be dependable.
5. Demonstrate your love: Actions speak louder than words.
6. Be honest

"When you approach re-establishing intimacy by engaging in conversations that use the six steps we just listed, you will get started on the right path to rebuilding your relationship. The real intimacy that you'll start to feel again when you're working on the steps will help you in your quest to live a loving life. It will make your physical intimacy more satisfying and will increase your overall well-being as an individual and as a spouse.

"You'll form greater trust in your relationship and have a sense of connection that will provide happiness and satisfaction. You'll also feel less emotional pain, even some relief from old emotional pain that could stem from your upbringing. You'll also feel your self-esteem and self-image expanding and growing."

"I'm sure you realize that this is just part of rebuilding your relationship with your spouse. The daily things you say and do will play a major role in rebuilding the trust, intimacy and love that make your marriage the key relationship in your life and a major source of happiness and fulfillment.

"I hope you also realize that taking steps to improve your relationship techniques will have a minor if any impact if you don't remain living a loving life. Remember that you're just one view away from the viewer life filled with hatred, selfishness, anger and misery."

Homework for Rebuilding your Relationship:

1. **Develop a plan to implement the six components of building intimacy into your relationship**
    a. **Write each component. Write one action you'll take this week to implement that component in your life.**
2. **Have a conversation with your spouse about intimacy. Use the listening component. Write down your summary of the conversation.**
3. **Don't let the consequences get cloudy. Write down your top five negative and top five positives again.**
4. **Experience at least 8-10 temptations per day and follow the ACV card to deal with them. If you don't have 8-10 temptations come to you, create enough to produce 8-10. You're still in need of practicing.**

Note: *Please refer to* www.poweroverpornography/relationships *to review the latest tips on improving your most valued relationships. Please also share your success stories and learning experiences*

Chapter 15: Practice, the power in repetition

Jason felt hope as he left David's house. He sensed the power in the concepts David taught him and was already practicing them with success.

As Jason closed the car door after arriving home, he smiled as he looked forward to greeting and spending time with his family. The relationship session fresh in his mind, he set a mental goal to make everyone in the family smile, laugh and enjoy the evening.

Jason walked in the front door as quietly as he could. He wanted to surprise his family. As he crept into the family room, he heard the TV but didn't recognize the program. He crouched and crept behind the sofa. Then, he jumped up and shouted "Boo."

Mike and Bailey both screamed. They were startled and annoyed and Mike was a little embarrassed about screaming like a little girl. They both looked at Jason and in unison said, "Da-a-a-ad!" They wanted to be mad but when they saw Jason's smile, they simply laughed. Bailey jumped over the back of the sofa and into Jason's arms. She hugged him tightly.

Becky heard the screams and came running from the other room in time to hear the "Da-a-a-ad." She smiled and gave Jason a kiss and a hug while he was holding Bailey. He looked into her eyes and glimpsed the girl he married. Along with the feelings of love towards her, he recognized that his living a loving life would make all the difference in his life with his wife and family.

After dinner, not only Jason and Mike, but Bailey and Becky went into the backyard to play soccer. After several minutes of play, Jason heard the baby crying from her walker on the patio and went to hold her. When he picked her up, he noticed the sun setting over the neighbor's house. He thought of his original vision as he looked back to the yard and saw Mike and Bailey laughing as Becky kicked the ball into the bushes. Hope filled his heart and he felt better than he had in months. He wasn't used to acknowledging and paying attention to his feelings but the training sessions with David were helping him pay attention.

David didn't follow up with Jason about homework. Jason's countenance showed that he was doing the homework and working the program. David started right into the evening's discussion.

"You have been addicted to viewing for a long time. When you first chose to live a loving life, you felt uncomfortable and probably still do, but to a lesser extent. This is typical when we change a habit or start something new. You felt stress but the stress declined pretty rapidly as you continued. The feelings of discomfort will continue to diminish over the next two to three weeks. At that point, you'll feel close to normal and realize that your comfort zone has expanded to begin living a loving life.

"You'll still have temptations, in fact I hope you created some temptations for your homework,

but you'll notice much lower stress and discomfort. You'll also notice a decline in the number and intensity of the temptations you experience. No other way around stress, but continue to feel the stress and do it anyway, recognizing that you are re-training yourself to achieve a wonderful vision and overcome a devastating habit.

"When you go through the "withdrawal," you can choose to be miserable or you can choose to heal yourself by feeling stress and temporary discomfort on your way to living a life of love. In other words, acknowledge that the stress is a good thing. Choose the stress, choose the discomfort, recognizing that you are getting stronger and are expanding your comfort zone to include living a loving life.

"In the past, when you tried to quit viewing you fought against the pain, stress and discomfort of withdrawal. Now you'll be willing to embrace them because you know those feelings are leading to healing and the pain and discomfort are only temporary. Realize that this is good and doesn't last long.

"Does this make sense?"

Jason felt good about reviewing his feelings and the minor discomfort still with him. He nodded his head with assurance. "Makes sense to me."

"Good. Because it's important, I want to discuss it further and even emphasize it with an illustration.

"You may not believe me when you look at my body now but I used to train with weights quite a bit in my younger days. I learned a very important principle. When I first started lifting weights, my muscles were so sore I could barely get out of bed the next day and had trouble walking for at least a week. But within a couple weeks my muscles adapted and the soreness went away. If I quit during the sore period, I would never have reached the new, expanded "comfort" zone that comes after a couple weeks or so.

"As I continued to train, I quickly learned that if I wanted to progress I needed to push my muscles beyond their comfort zone and into painful territory. When I trained in this painful way—the pain wasn't too bad; I called it the "good kind of pain"—my muscles increased in strength and size much more rapidly that when I exercised pain-free.

"By the way, what do you think helped me power through the pain and discomfort?"

Jason quickly replied, "It must have been your vision."

David responded with a smile, "You're right. I had a vision of my appearance with ripped abs and defined muscles. Just so you don't think it was all about vanity, I also had a vision of high energy and excellent athletic performance.

"I knew the pain, soreness and overall discomfort would be temporary but essential for me to

gain the strength and definition I desired and to perform athletically as I envisioned.

"So the first concept of practice is '**Expand your comfort zone, feel the pain and know that you're growing'**" David wrote on the board as he spoke.

Practice:
1. Attitude: Expand your comfort zone, feel the pain and know that you're growing

"Let's quickly move into practice concept number two, precision. A few years ago, I enjoyed a day skiing with a friend of mine. I noticed that he was a much better skier than I was even though we were at the same level just a few years earlier. When I asked him how he improved so much while I stayed the same, he mentioned that he took lessons and worked specifically on the suggestions from the instructor.

"The ski instructor watched him ski, then provided him with very specific steps to improve his skiing. By following the specific steps in the precise way that the instructor provided, his level of expertise rose quickly.

"You've received very specific steps from an experienced and, may I add, very good looking instructor." David and Jason smiled and David continued. "Now it's time to practice with precision." He wrote on the board '**Precision: Practice precisely to gain power on your way to mastery.'**

Practice:
1. Attitude: Expand your comfort zone, feel the pain and know that you're growing
2. Precision: Practice precisely to gain power on your way to mastery

"When we practice the right way on the specific instructions from the expert, we don't waste our practice but make it pay. Vince Lombardi, the legendary NFL coach put it this way, "Practice doesn't make perfect, perfect practice makes perfect.

I think it will be helpful to look at practicing precisely from both the how-to perspective as well as the how-not-to perspective. Let's first go over how not to practice. I think you'll see several ways that the 'how nots' lack precision. We'll label this 'Unhealthy Practice:'

Unhealthy practice:

1. *Thinking it's OK to cheat **just once** or thinking it is better to **reduce viewing gradually**. These are lies. **Cheating just once doesn't just stop your progress cold** it causes you to start all over again and will make it much more difficult to achieve your goal. When you choose to cheat just once, you're choosing all the negative consequences of viewing and*

will need to start over.

2. *Not acknowledging the temptation. Remember to make it a conscious choice. If you try to ignore the temptation, it will fight and struggle for your attention. The temptation will linger and come back strongly to bite you. Acknowledging it makes it weaker.*
3. *Not accepting the temptation. Accepting means realizing that experiencing the temptation does not make you bad and that it is okay to experience it and the emotion that accompanies it. Thinking that the temptation means you're less than others starts you on the victim cycle.*
4. *Falling back into SAPS habits: **S**uppression **A**voidance, relying on **P**rotection and **S**ubstitution. You know how to deal with the temptation. Practice with the ACV card to avoid falling back into old, bad habits. SAPS lead to relapse. ACV leads to a loving life.*
5. *Denying your ever-present freedom to choose. When you tell yourself that you must, you have to, you better or you should, you're not telling the truth. You always have the freedom to choose.*
6. *Not focusing on the present. Thoughts of the future will bring anxiety. If you find yourself worrying about the future, tell yourself that your decision not to view pornography is for this instance only and you can choose differently the next time. If you find yourself dredging up your viewer past, the familiar failure patterns and viewer self-image may come to mind. Acknowledge them and bring yourself to the present by stating out loud in your mind that you are free to choose in this instance and that your choice of vision will lead to confidence and a new 'living a loving life' self-image.*
7. *Cheating on your vision statement. If you don't always state and "feel" your vision statement, it will become cloudy over time and lose its power. If your current vision statement starts to lose its power to you, it's time for you to re-energize it with emotion-charged language of a concrete, vivid vision that is directly related to your top five positive consequences list.*
8. *Skipping steps. When you practice, don't skip steps. When you get sloppy in your practice, you set yourself up for relapsing.*

"Any questions about unhealthy practice?"

"No questions, but I think I have one to add. I'm not sure how to word it but I noticed just prior to my relapse from the 12-step program, I felt very confident, that I had overcome the problem for good, that I didn't need to attend meetings any more. I think the attitude and the lack of practice that followed helped set me up to fall."

"Excellent point. I think we can break this into two unhealthy practices. Let me try re-phrasing them and see if we keep your meaning. In fact, I think the overconfidence component is so important I'm going to expand it.

9. *Becoming overconfident. Overconfidence leads to thinking that you no longer need to practice. Overconfidence typically precedes a relapse. When you become overconfident or believe that you are 'cured' you are setting yourself up to skip steps ('I don't need to go through the steps anymore—I'm cured') or to put yourself in SAPS mode. You also run the risk of subjecting yourself to unneeded temptation environments, trying to rationalize the*

initial temptation ('Now that I'm cured, I can go to the strip club with colleagues but just stay in the back and not look')

10. *Failing to practice. Placing practice lower on the list of priorities, forgetting or stopping due to overconfidence, "just too busy" or other "rationaliezations."*

"How did I do?"

"Great, you not only captured my meaning but added some other important aspects as well."

"As you know, I don't like to dwell on the negative so let's quickly move on to the positive, healthy ways to practice."

Healthy practice:

1. *Acknowledge immediately. As we've discussed, acknowledging the temptation as soon as it arrives and in a very conscious way is one of the keys to success. Practice acknowledgement and don't let a temptation linger for even a moment. Any attempts at suppression, substitution or avoidance on your part will cause the temptation to begin fighting for a way in.*
2. *Follow acknowledging with accepting immediately. So you were tempted. Big deal. Accept it as normal—it happens to everyone--and move on to the next step.*
3. *Acknowledge and exercise your power to choose. Free choice is one of the greatest powers we have but only if we exercise it. Just as acknowledging and accepting the temptation is key, so is acknowledging and exercising your freedom to choose. When you choose, remember that your choice is for this instance only. Realizing that you can choose at any time to view and do will prevent feelings of deprivation that lead to relapse.*
4. *Stating and feeling your vivid vision. When you state your vision, feel it at the same time. Emotions drive our decisions. The positive emotions evoked by your vision will power you past temptations. Vision losing its emotional power? Then it's time to refine and re-vivify.*

"I hope these make sense to you."

Jason's response was immediate. "I've always known the value of practice but this helps motivate me to do it right."

"Excellent. Let me discuss another key aspect of precision. As you've recited your vision to me on a regular basis, I've noticed slight changes in wording beyond the changes in meaning that we discussed. Your vision is one of the most important parts of your recovery. It's important that you refine it so that the picture it paints in your mind is believable, vivid and nearly tangible.

"If the positive consequences upon which it is based are not grounded in truth, your mind will not believe you and the vision will fail. If your vision is murky, meaning it's grounded in abstract concepts and concepts that are hard to picture, it loses its power. Use picture-evoking words, emotion-evoking words and vivid color to give your vision the power it deserves.

"If your vision seems unreachable or too far away, then it loses its power. This is the nearly

tangible part of the vision. Make it so that the realization of the vision can happen in a relatively short time frame, is grounded on positive consequences for you, not others and is associated with words that make it feel very real and very close.

"One other tip that can help empower your vision: If the vision rolls off your tongue easily and readily, you'll be more likely to use it as part of your ACV process. It doesn't need to be a poem, but sounding a little poetic may help you remember it, be proud of it and recite it the same way each time. When you recite it the same way each time, it becomes a part of you.

Jason agreed. "I can see how refining my vision statement so it is easily recited without losing its meaning and power can help it. I'll refine it so that it has a nice ring and rhythm to it."

> **Note**: *Please refer to* poweroverpornography.com/vision *for example vision statements. Please share your vision statement with the community while you view others.*

"Great. Let's move on." David began writing on the white board again:

3. **Repetition. Creating and Maintaining a habit takes practice.**

Practice:

1. Attitude: Expand your comfort zone, feel the pain and know that you're growing
2. Precision: Practice precisely to gain power on your may to mastery
3. Repetition: Creating and Maintaining a habit takes practice

"Jason, I've found that some people don't believe that repetition helps. They know the program, why do they need to repeat it? When I come across this attitude, I can safely bet that the person showing it is going to have a much harder time succeeding.

"Just like the weightlifting example, if you don't repeat the exercises on a regular basis, you don't gain muscle. If you don't repeat the ACV on a regular basis, you will be subject to relapsing into the life of lust.

"Now, let me repeat something that we covered in a prior session. I've tried to use the principle of repetition at various parts of our sessions as emphasis and to help you remember them. After several days using this program, you discovered that the number of your temptations declined. This happens to everyone fully involved in the program. What we try to emphasize is the importance of practice so we encourage you to create temptations out of thin air so that you can practice

addressing them.

During the first few weeks of the program if you're not experiencing at least 8-10 temptations per day, then you should create temptations so that the combination or real and created temptations are 8-10 per day.

"I recall your being a little skeptical about creating temptations. Now that you've tried it, please tell me how you feel about creating temptations."

Jason thought for a moment. "It didn't' really make sense to me at first. I've always been told to avoid tempting situations and triggers. It seems like I could get into trouble creating my own temptations."

David replied. "I understand how you felt. I used to think that way as well and spent many years thinking that the answer was avoidance and self-discipline. Now I realize that creating the temptation myself provides practice and helps cement my choosing the best consequences.

"I spent too many years as a viewer/doer so my reaction to triggers is now wired in my brain. In order to make a new reaction path in my brain, I needed and still need to practice. We've found that people unwilling to create their own temptations often relapse after a few months. The old brain wiring takes over because they haven't practiced enough with the new reaction sequence."

"That makes sense to me," Jason responded. "I'm still adjusting to it but I've created my own temptations as you suggested and have found that if I just use the ACV card to address them, then I don't feel any more at risk of relapsing. I don't want to revert to my old viewing choices. I've also learned that avoidance doesn't lead to healing and a life of love but just puts off the inevitable relapse for a little while."

"Good way to phrase it. I'm going to note that for helping future viewers. I'm glad you see it that way. In order to change the neural pathways of your brain and make the loving life your way of life, practice, including creating temptations and urges out of thin air, is essential. In fact, **choosing to practice every day is like giving yourself an immunization against a deadly disease when you know you'll be out among the infected**.

"After three weeks, you can cut the created temptations so that you are averaging 2-4 total temptations per day. You'll have enough practice under your belt by then that your job is to maintain the pathways in your brain instead of building new ones."

"Do you recall our meeting at the 12-step meeting when I told you that I'd been pornography sober for 22 years?"

"Yeah. I was very impressed. I thought I was on that same path after my first foray into 12-step but I only lasted six months."

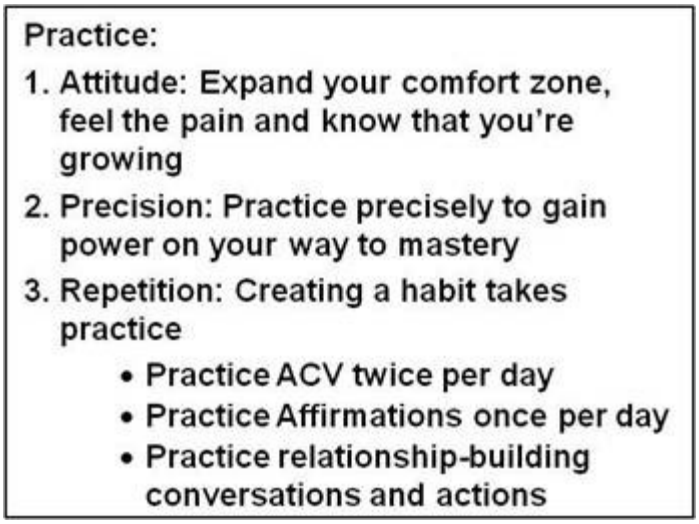
"One of the keys to my sobriety is practice. I try to practice twice per day dealing with

temptations to view. Sometimes they're real but most times I create them. I have had temptations come unexpectedly from sources, or triggers, that I was not aware of before they hit me. Having practiced my ACV program at least twice daily, I was able to deal with the new sources of urges just like the old ones.

"I'm afraid I would have relapsed had I not been practicing daily. If you're like everyone else who has been through this program, you'll require the same level of repetitive practice. The repetition will keep the vision from clouding over and will further cement choosing the vision and positive consequences that you prefer. Will you plan, oops, not plan but choose to practice every day so you can realize your vision and live a loving life?"

Jason nodded his head in agreement and David continued. There are three specific daily practices that will keep the clouds away and keep you living a loving life.

David wrote "**Practice ACV twice per day, practice affirmations once per day and practice relationship-building conversations and actions**" on the board.


Practice:
1. Attitude: Expand your comfort zone, feel the pain and know that you're growing
2. Precision: Practice precisely to gain power on your way to mastery
3. Repetition: Creating a habit takes practice
• Practice ACV twice per day
• Practice Affirmations once per day
• Practice relationship-building conversations and actions

"I now want to discuss cloudiness. Remember our initial discussion about clarity and how consequences of our actions become cloudy so we have to clarify them to bring them to mind?

Jason smiled. "Interesting you ask. Cloudy has become part of my vocabulary now when describing things I can't remember very well. I recall the discussion well. It was one of our early sessions and I remember how new but powerful it felt to me."

"Well, over my 22 years of sobriety, I've adopted a specific way of practice that allows me to live a loving life. I've mentioned three of the critical steps to practice, attitude, precision and repetition. Now I want to mention some of the others.

"I discovered early on that the 100-day wall was real…"

Before David could continue, Jason interrupted, "100-day wall? What is that?"

"We haven't discussed it directly although we alluded to it when you brought up

overconfidence and when we discussed the importance of practice. I and others who help individuals overcome pornography addiction have found that once viewers achieve sobriety, we tend to see a significant percentage relapse after 90-100 days.

"We refer to this as the 100-day wall. I'm not positive what causes it but I suspect the core of the wall to be overconfidence and subsequent lack of practice. Then a powerful, sudden, unexpected temptation hits. The viewer reverts back to the viewer brain wiring instead of following the ACV brain wiring and relapse happens. Often, the one relapse is followed by a spiraling down in the shame cycle and multiple successive relapses, leading directly to a life full of misery and all the negative consequences we've discussed.

"I sometimes refer to the wall as the 100-day wall of clouds. I like to think that the daily practice keeps some of the clouds away but the full program becomes cloudy over time and relapse potential sneaks in.

"There are five steps we've instituted as part of 'practice' that break down the 100-day wall of clouds and build towards mastery and the all important **maintenance of mastery**, or the 'keeping the clouds away.' Just like a quarterback has to keep practicing to keep his skills sharp, so we have to keep practicing to keep our skills sharp. Just mastering them once and then forgetting to practice them would result in their atrophy, similar to how a quarterback's ability to throw to receivers on time and his other skills would atrophy without practice. "

David wrote these on the board as he stated them. "One, we tell you about the 100-day wall. Once you know about it, you can bolster your practice when you start drifting or becoming overconfident. Two, we institute scenario practice, three, we institute program review to remove cloudiness, four, we institute community interaction and five, we provide regular stories, updates, new research and practice tips on a monthly basis. This will provide additional help and motivation to stay on the living a loving life path."

Practice:

1. Attitude: Expand your comfort zone, feel the pain and know that you're growing
2. Precision: Practice precisely to gain power on your way to mastery
3. Repetition: Creating a habit takes practice
    - Practice ACV twice per day
    - Practice Affirmations once per day
    - Practice relationship-building conversations and actions

100-day Wall: Power over relapse

1. Be aware that 100-day wall is coming
2. Institute scenario practice
3. Institute regular program review to keep clouds away
4. Become involved in the community
5. Participate and receive monthly stories, updates, research and practices that boost motivation

"I was feeling pretty comfortable about the first three practice steps but now it seems pretty complicated. Plus I'm a little worried about this 100-day wall coming up."

"Remember that the choice is always yours and that you can choose to view anytime you want. You're not at the 100-day point so you don't need to worry about it. Bring yourself back to the present and concern yourself with this moment and your choices.

"Also remember that forewarned is forearmed. You now know a failure path that many have trod before. If they would have known that this failure path existed, they may have avoided it. You now have the practice steps of the success path. I fully anticipate that using these practice steps day-by-day, you'll choose your vision and won't even notice the 100-day wall. It will be the 100-day speed bump for you."

Jason seemed reassured about the 100-day wall so David continued. "Let's address the complicated nature of the practice. I think once you understand the practice steps, you'll see how they can naturally flow and don't take much more than a few minutes per day. Most of them are simply practicing concepts and exercises that you've learned in the program.

"Take number two, institute scenario practice. Instead of just creating temptations, you create temptations involving different scenarios that you can contemplate happening at some point. Here are some example scenarios to consider:

- Friend invites you to go to R-rated movie that has nudity
- An email you receive has a photo of nudity or close to it and a link to an associated website

- You notice a pretty, scantily-clad woman at the store
- You receive free access to HBO or other premium movie service at home
- You travel to Las Vegas for a business convention and have access to pornographic movies, strip clubs, etc.

"These are examples of scenarios that may be triggers for you but you will want to think of your own 'temptation scenarios.' Each viewer has similar triggers but also tends to have ones that are particularly tempting to him or her. If you have a temptation scenario that is particularly tempting to you or can imagine one, including fantasies, then you should include them in your scenarios.

"Once you have listed your scenarios, once per week, go through five of them as ACV practice. By practicing scenario temptations, you will be prepared for a strong temptation that may come to you in an unexpected manner.

"Weekly practice becomes more difficult to remember so I suggest you put the weekly appointment on your calendar for the entire next year. It should take only five minutes or less once per week but your calendar reminder will prompt you to do it. Does this seem doable?"

"Now that you explained it as taking just five minutes a week and adding it to my calendar to remember, it seems quite doable. I can also see how this type of practice can prepare me for confronting temptations of different varieties."

"Great. Let's move on to the next one, program review.

"The major parts of the program include clarifying consequences, acknowledging and accepting temptations, exercising power to choose, developing and choosing a vivid vision, stating affirmations, working on relationships and practicing. We've discovered that cloudiness returns to consequences when there is no practice. Cloudiness also returns on many other aspects of the program if regular reviews are not performed.

"I hope you've noticed that the homework we ask you to complete includes review of prior exercises. We do that to make sure that the crucial and critical parts of the program remain in your conscious mind so that you can use them to take power back from viewing pornography.

"By regularly reviewing key parts of the program in its entirety, you'll remain strong on your path to living a loving life. Regular means a once-per-month repeat of a session of your choice so that you are reviewing the entire program over a one year period. In essence, we're recommending 30-60 minutes per month regularly scheduled on your calendar. Does that seem doable to you?"

Jason responded slowly, "Yeah, it seems doable but it seems like this practice is getting rather extensive. I can see the merit in reviewing but it seems so fresh in my mind right now so that the once per month review seems like overkill."

David smiled as he said, "You do a great job of knowing your heart and providing honest feedback. It allows me to customize our sessions and make them more impactful for you.

“Let me address your question directly. You’ve spent years as a viewer and doer. The residual habit remains until your response is so practiced that it happens automatically. “Once it becomes automatic, it won’t stay that way without practice. The details and reasons why are prominent in your mind right now but will fade over time and you may become more susceptible to relapse. We’re basing our recommendations for practice on the experiences of other viewers, both successful and not. We hope you’ll trust this experience and experience the long-term success we desire for you.

“If I ever sound a little heavy-handed and your inner rebel begins to come out, recognize that it’s always your choice on practicing. Does that help?”

Jason nodded and David continued, “Becoming involved in the community is a success factor that we borrowed directly from 12-step programs, such as AA. The support found from other people experiencing the same addiction has a healing power. By discovering others struggling with the same viewing problem, you’ll take heart that you’re not alone and that others are healing. You’ll receive some power from knowing that others are successfully working the program and living a loving life.

“I know that many of our ex-viewers have a difficult time getting together in person so I’ve set up blogs and on-line forums for the community to gather. I’m new at the on-line stuff but so far it seems to be helping. I’ll invite you to contribute and gain from others who share their commitment to the program and to living a loving life.

“Another way to gain power from community is to attend 12-step programs. The concepts are powerful and helpful.

> Note: *You may join the community and explore support networks on the forums and blogs at www.poweroverpornography.com. We invite you to join the member area and sign up for the email “practice” program.*

“The last practice tip for making the 100-day wall into the 100-day speed bump is a little less concrete but important. Although we’ve characterized it as ‘Participate and receive monthly stories, updates, research and practices that boost motivation,’ we can summarize it as ‘stay in the healing zone of the program to stay motivated.’

“We will stay in communication with you and will plan to send you additional information and research, including others’ stories, new research findings and program changes. The communications will help you improve your existing practice and make changes to it as we discover better success paths. Does this make sense?”

“It makes a lot of sense. I like self development programs. I know this is different but my experience with those programs helps me see the value of the regular motivational communication.

“When I’ve been involved in self-improvement programs before, I’ve started strong, then become bored or lost interest over time and gradually stopped. I can really see the merit of staying

connected with new research and new stories to keep motivated and to stay on track."

"Great. We're going to end our discussion today so you can go home and enjoy the evening with your family. We've covered a lot of aspects of practice today that you'll need some time to absorb and set up your plans. Next time we'll discuss traveling and other special situations and how to deal with them.

Remember, mastery requires practice and practice helps you live a loving life as well as helps you improve your relationships and improve your self-image and self-esteem."

Homework for Practice:

1. **Write the following and state out loud (in your mind if not in a private place)**
    a. **When I feel discomfort, stress or anxiety over the change to living a loving life from a viewer life, I embrace the feeling, realizing I'm growing stronger and my comfort zone is expanding.**
    b. **When I practice ACV and affirmations precisely, I begin the path to mastery and the realization of my vision.**
    c. **Mastery requires practice: I will practice ACV twice per day, practice affirmations once per day and practice my relationship building skills on a regular basis.**
2. **Write out 5-10 scenarios that would present temptations. Schedule 5 minutes per week to run through ACV practice for 5 scenarios.**
3. **Schedule 30-45 minutes per month for the next year to review a session of the program. Choose to honor the schedule.**
4. **Sign up for the online community and participate. Write down the minutes per week you will participate or the number of 12-step meetings you will attend per month to stay connected with a support group.**
5. **Read David's emails of stories, research and new practice methods to stay motivated.**

Chapter 16: Travel and Special Situations

Jason was excited to get home. Tonight was Mike's first soccer game of the season. He had come to know more about his son and felt a little more like a real father to him for the first time since his relapse.

Mike was waiting on the front stoop as Jason drove in the driveway. "Dad, let's go to the game. I don't want to be late!" Mike shouted as he ran to the car.

"Hello to you too, buddy. The game doesn't start for two hours. We'll make sure we're on time but I want to change first and eat a little."

"Well, hurry up. I don't want to be late."

"Alright. I think our team is ready and I'm excited to see how you do in your first game. Let's go eat dinner."

When the ref blew the whistle signaling the end of the game, the score was tied 3-3. Jason was excited about the game and proud that he had not yelled at the refs. "That may be a first for me," he thought. "Living a loving life seems to be working in other areas of my life besides my family relationships."

The team lost on penalty kicks. Mike was one of the two players on his team who missed their penalty kicks and he started to cry as he came off the field. Jason quickly put his arm around him but didn't say anything. It seemed like the right thing to do, both the arm and the not saying anything.

After a Mike started to calm down, he whimpered, "I lost the game for my team."

"I think you're one of the reasons the team even made it to penalty kicks. You played a good game but I understand how it hurts when you lose or don't make the kicks you think you'll make. It's okay to feel sad about it.

"Once we get home, I'll remind you of all the great passes and shots you took and made and you'll begin to feel a lot better." Mike didn't say anything as they walked to the car. Becky was loading Bailey and Nicole into the car and told Mike that he played a good game.

"Jason, welcome to your last regular session. How are you feeling about the program, your progress and your outlook?"

"Interesting you should ask but I'm not sure what you mean by 'regular?'

"I'm sure you did your homework but let's review it. Last time we discussed practice and life beyond the scheduled program sessions. There are a number of *ongoing practices,* pun intended, that

will keep you living a loving life. Why don't you share your homework experience with me?"

Jason defended himself, "Oh, I understand what you're referring to. Yes, I did the homework and I know how important ongoing practice is to success.

"I'm still experiencing a few temptations per day so I'm creating more, maybe not 10 but at least six per day. I told you that I thought you were wrong about creating temptations but now I'm doing it and it's working. I run through the ACV process and feel more power each time…but don't worry, I'm not getting cocky."

"Good, tell my about your other practice experience."

"Well, the affirmations that I thought were pretty hokey are working. I smile each morning after I say them and am feeling better. I say them to myself in the mirror while I am shaving each morning. Unless I grow a beard, I'll remember to say them each day. I walk out of the bathroom each morning with a lighter step and increased confidence. I've become a fan of affirmations.

"The relationship practice went a little more slowly. I haven't had serious relationship discussions with Becky but I'm listening better and trying to talk about more serious subjects. I think I can help rebuild the relationship over time. It is kind of scary though. I've never been one who is good at engaging in deep conversations."

"Well, it's good that you're practicing then. You'll get better with practice and your relationship with Becky can and should evolve into a source of great joy and happiness for both of you. What about the scenario practices?"

"I felt a little funny at first when trying to imagine myself in potentially compromising situations but I feel like it helps me be prepared for temptations that may not occur every day. I also have my review sessions scheduled for the whole year and am looking forward to engaging in the online community and hearing more from you on a regular basis.

"You mentioned last time that the scenario practice can help me when I'm confronted with a temptation that is different and possibly stronger from what I encounter normally. Not that I became worried about it but I am interested in making sure I learn from others in the P.O.P. community about the temptations they suffer. If they ring true to me as possible temptations then I can include them in my scenario practice.

"I think if I would have known about and practiced every day after my initial success with the AA-like, 12-step program I would have been able to avoid relapse. I can see how practice is a vital part of recovery and of leading a loving life. Thank you for teaching it to me and for committing to help me as I go forward."

"It's been my pleasure to teach you and learn with you. As the saying goes, the teacher always learns more than the student. These sessions have been great for me to practice and re-learn the P.O.P. concepts and exercises. Anything else?"

"This isn't practice-related but remember when I told you my experience with the leader of my church, my bishop?"

"Yes. As I recall, your last interaction wasn't that great."

"Right. Well I spoke with him again on Sunday. I felt, based upon my beliefs, that I needed to confess my relapse to him. I dreaded it but felt like it was the good kind of uncomfortable feeling that I could feel and do it anyway. I did it and it was a good experience. But that's not my point. As I knelt beside my bed that night in prayer to God, I felt a great sense of happiness come over me and a realization that my happiness in general has increased.

"I feel like I'm forgiven of my viewing and doing. In the past, my attempts at confession and repentance to God were half-hearted because I felt like I was going to relapse in the future so it wasn't sincere, even though I wanted more than anything to stop. This time was different. I felt sincere, that now I can choose to stay porn-free and live a loving life. To make a long story short, it was a remarkable spiritual experience for me.

"I recall an incident many years ago when I heard a new convert speak of his experience in embracing God. He described how he thought he was happy and that his life was just fine before his conversion. He then said that since he found God, he has experienced a new, higher "plane" of happiness that he didn't know existed.

"That description stayed with me and came to mind again after my prayer experience. I realized that my happiness quotient has increased since I've been learning from you and practicing my ACV, affirmations and other parts of the program. My love for my family, especially my wife, is stronger, deeper and more loving. My critical nature has transformed a bit so that I am more accepting and less easily provoked to anger. I feel the spirit of God in my life in a way that I haven't felt in years or maybe ever felt.

"That's the long answer to how I'm doing. The short answer is I'm doing great."

"I'm glad you shared your experience with me Jason. We briefly discussed the deep shame and tremendous hits to self-esteem that are natural consequences of viewing. We didn't discuss the big hits to your relationship with God but that is also a natural consequence.

"Now that you've shared a bit of your religious beliefs with me, I'll share a little of mine with you. I believe that all of us are God's children and I believe He is offended that any of his children would be used by pornographers. I believe that viewing pornography and masturbating are misusing one of the greatest powers he's given us as his children, that of creating life. I think His Spirit is withdrawn from us when we engage in viewing and doing."

"This program works for those who have faith in God and for those who don't. I believe in God and actively practice my religion but respect those with different beliefs. I just want to help them realize the positive consequences of living a loving life.

"When you feel that you are violating God's commandments, you naturally pull away from Him. He is always there and willing to help but you feel, and rightly so, that your standing with him is less so you have a harder time connecting with Him and His Spirit.

"I also believe that the power to create life is not only one of the great gifts God has given to us but that when we misuse that power or the sexual urges that come with the power, that the Spirit and Love of God is withdrawn from us to a degree. This has always been a powerful thought that I experience when you and others who have gone before you discuss the consequences of viewing and doing.

"Almost all men and women discover that the loss of love in their hearts is a natural consequence. I believe this loss is partly due to having less access to the Spirit of God because of misuse of the power to create life.

"The deep shame and low self-esteem make it difficult for you to love others and to maintain strong, loving relationships with anyone, even those closest to you. They also make it difficult for you to maintain a strong relationship with God and to feel his direction in your life."

Jason nodded as he felt the power of David's words.

"I don't generally discuss my beliefs throughout this program even though they are strongly held. My desire is to help everyone and I worry that those who believe otherwise may reject the message if they disagree with the messenger.

"On the other hand, I would be ungrateful if I didn't acknowledge God's hand in this program and let you know that the principles upon which it is based are true and God-given. If you're interested, we can meet again and I can lay out the principles from a spiritual perspective."

Note: *Please refer to* www.poweroverpornography/spiritualprinciples *to read the specific principles from a spiritual perspective.*

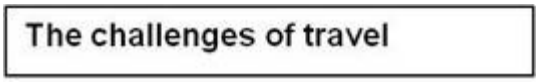
"I would like that."

"I'm glad to see that your progress on living a loving life is paying dividends for you already. You'll certainly have bumps in the road in your relationships along the way because you're human but living a loving life, not being a viewer, will make those bumps feel smaller.

"Well, let's talk about travel and special situations this week.

David wrote on the board '**The challenges of travel.'**

"Jason, do you travel much?"



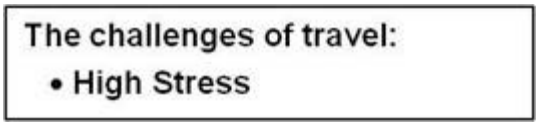
"I'm mostly local but have spent several days at a time at clients' locations in different states and usually travel a couple times per year to training seminars."

"How has your viewing habit been in the past when you travel?"

"A lot worse than when I'm not."

"I suspected it may be. Let's explore why and address what to do about it."

David turned to the white board and began writing, '**High Stress.'**



'Do you generally experience greater stress when you're traveling?"

"I suppose so. The waits for security, worrying about late planes, dealing with crowds and with unfamiliar places as well as having so much of the travel experience out of my control adds to the stress."

"What was one of the number one ways you chose to relieve stress in the past?"

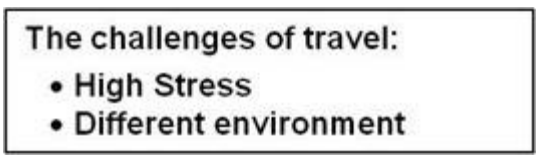
"Viewing and doing."

"Now you know that using viewing and doing as stress relief actually creates more stress and puts you in the *increased stress, increased shame cycle* that made your life and relationships miserable.

"The problem comes with the change and increase in stress leading you to the viewing and doing downward spiral before you know it. The key is preparing for it so you'll recognize it and be able to exercise your ACV process.

"Before we get into applying the ACV process, let's make sure you're prepared for the other issues you face with travel."

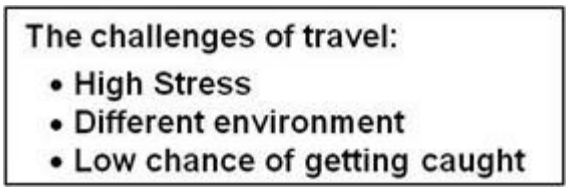
David wrote '**Different environment.'**



"You're used to practicing the ACV process in your home and work environment and are seeing results with your most important relationships and probably with your work performance due to your increased confidence. When you're faced with a different environment, the temptation can creep up on you without your recognizing it. You then may not respond immediately with the Acknowledge and Accept process.

"One of the main reasons for imagining tempting scenarios is to prepare you for different environments. I hope that business travel remains one of those scenarios for you. As long as you realize you'll be in a different environment and that the temptation may take different forms due to your environment, you'll be able to **recognize**, acknowledge and accept it. In essence, in a different environment, you need to add the "R" for recognize to the beginning of the process: RACV."

David wrote on the white board '**Low chance of getting caught.'**



"When you're alone in your hotel room with adult movies available on TV as well as no possibility of being discovered on your traditionally-used adult websites, the temptations may take on an added strength, accompanied by the lie that 'Just this once won't hurt' or 'I'm not hurting anyone but myself' or even 'No one will know.'

"By the way, I'm not a fan of titling pornography as "adult." There is nothing about viewing pornography that is adult. The adult path is the non-addictive path, not the artificial, relationship-destroying path. The mark of adult behavior is the delay of immediate gratification in exchange for greater joy in the future. Childish behavior is satisfying current urges regardless of future consequences.

"You already know that "just this once" is a lie, maybe the biggest one. I think you realize that choosing to view just this once will put you back in the downward spiral. You always have the right to choose in the moment so you won't feel denied or deprived but once you hear in your head "just this once won't hurt" tell yourself the truth, that it will hurt and put yourself into ACV mode so you can choose your vision.

David wrote as he talked:
Pie on the window – strong temptation close at hand

The challenges of travel:

- High Stress
- Different environment
- Low chance of getting caught
- Pie on the window – strong temptation close at hand

"Back in the olden days," David smiled, "one of the common descriptions of avoiding tempting others was the story of the mother who put her pie in the window to cool after taking it out of the oven. When the children helped themselves to the pie after the mother instructed them to not touch it, the blame shifted to the mother for introducing such a strong temptation that the children could not resist.

"As you can guess, I don't like the analogy. The children give their power to the mother when they say the temptation was too strong. If they're prepared for it, they can deal with it.

"A related aspect of traveling is the closeness of the temptation. It's right in front of you in a way that you are not used to confronting on a daily basis. Once you recognize this difference and realize that it may come quickly and strongly, you'll be prepared for it.

"Now that you know some of the differences in temptation while traveling, you'll be prepared to deal with them. Not only will you be able to add the "Recognize" to the ACV formula, you will want to add some vividness to your vision.

"We talked about the power of vision to overwhelm the temptation but when the temptation is going to come in different forms and more strongly, you'll want to focus on overwhelming it with a powerful vision.

"The best way we've found to deal with this, especially with those who travel frequently, and are faced with a variety of different temptations of varying strength is to follow the 'Travel Formula:'

On the day of your travel, make time for the following steps. Plan to do the steps before you arrive at your destination. Some viewer/doer travelers prefer to do it on the plane while others take a few minutes in the morning just after they get ready to walk out the door. Consider this your 'away game' practice:

1. **Write down your top 5 negative consequences. Read them to yourself at least three times each.**
2. **Write down your top 5 positive consequences. Read them to yourself at least three times each.**
    a. **Although you've written both the negative and positive consequences before, write them again as part of the formula. Writing uses more of your senses, takes greater action and helps cement the consequences in your brain. Reading them to yourself multiple times contributes to their becoming top-of-mind instead of staying in the back of your mind (they become less cloudy). Remember how important repetition**

is.

3. **Re-write your vision. Because you've practiced reciting your vision multiple times—remember the power of repetition—this will be easy for you to do. Use this re-writing as a time to vividly picture it in your mind. If it's losing some of its vividness, do some tweaking to bring it back to life.**
4. **Close your eyes and rehearse the mental picture of your vision three times. The vision will grow in strength and the visualization exercise will leave you happy, relaxed and confident.**
5. **Recite your affirmations three times. The affirmations will increase your confidence, will remind you of who you really are and will increase your self-esteem. As we discussed, these are vital steps to offset the huge hits to your confidence and self-esteem that viewing and doing caused. The affirmations also keep you in the mindset of who you really are, not who you used to define yourself as when you were a viewer.**

"For your homework, please write the away-game practice steps on a note card and put it in a pocket of your travel bag. This will help remind you of the steps to take to prepare for traveling."

Jason smiled. "The rule of five. These five steps make good sense to me to provide extra power for business trips."

David smiled back and said, "There are other special situations beyond traveling that can put you in situations with viewing/doing temptations that you haven't experienced before. The best way to manage them is to create scenarios for them and walk through the ACV process with each one of the scenarios. In essence, when you undertake your regular scenario practice, spend the first couple minutes creating one or two new scenarios that you can imagine yourself experiencing.

"As you suggested earlier, you'll learn of other scenarios when you join our on-line community and see what others have experienced. Now that you've completed a scenario exercise, are there other scenarios you can imagine yourself experiencing?"

"Here are a few that I thought of. Becky received a call from her mother this week that her dad will be in the hospital for surgery in a couple weeks. She thinks her mother was hinting that it would be nice if Becky were able to come for a few days or even a full two weeks.

I am concerned about her being gone and how that experience will be for my viewing and doing. In the past, viewing picked up, sometimes pretty ferociously if Becky was ever out of town."

"Go on."

"I'm concerned that I may start feeling deprived and feel like I deserve to satisfy my sexual desires by viewing and doing. I think if I go through the scenario of her being gone and focusing on my freedom to choose, I can handle this one."

"Great scenario and good job catching the way this scenario tries to lie to you about your

freedom to choose. Any others that come to mind?"

"Another one that has happened in the past is fantasizing about a girlfriend from college. I was initially surprised that I didn't experience that one recently but I think my increased love for my wife has helped. I'm still not naïve enough to think it's gone for good.

"I think instead of acknowledging a desire to view and do that I'll acknowledge and accept a temptation to have sex with her. It seems a little crass, but that is how the temptation hits and I think I need to acknowledge it correctly."

"It seems like you're teaching me now. I think the scenarios are good and acknowledging the actual temptation is an important step to killing it. You seem to understand quite well how to handle special situations/temptations with scenario practice. This is an important part of your practice as you imagine new types of temptation scenarios in your weekly practice sessions."

"Let's now talk a little more about fantasy. You just described a fantasy that periodically hits you regarding an old girlfriend. Most viewers have a difficult time not recalling images of past views or of other fantasies, some similar to what you described.

When trying to stop viewing, many viewers resort to fantasizing past images in their minds. Other viewers will fantasize with celebrities or others they may know.

"Viewers will often see fantasies as the smoking alternative to alcohol. Remember our discussion at the 12-step meeting about how many alcoholics and other addicts trade one addiction for a "lesser" one, particularly smoking?

"Many viewers believe that trading actual viewing/doing to fantasizing means they are not in their addiction. What do you think?"

Jason thought for a moment. "It seems like fantasy is just a form of substitution. The temptation hasn't been dealt with directly with ACV. I know in the past when I began to use fantasy, thinking it was a better alternative to viewing and doing, I felt like I had started on the path, or cycle, and viewing and doing was inevitable.

"Are the consequences of fantasizing the same as actually viewing and doing?"

David didn't answer the question, but asked, "What do you think? Think of your past fantasies. Did you suffer from the same consequences?"

Jason answered quickly. "Yeah. I think I was merely letting my viewing mind try to rationalize that fantasizing was different and not as bad. But now that I recall my own experiences, I think the consequences of fantasizing are probably the same as viewing and doing, maybe not as severe but still the same."

"Based upon my work with many other viewers, I think you're right. When a viewer starts

fantasizing he is on the road to viewing and begins to suffer the same consequences. What should be done when fantasies of past viewing, of other pretty girls, of celebrities, of past girlfriends or of any other sexual situation pop into your mind?"

"That's simple. Just ACV them, just like temptations to view and do."

"Right. Fantasy is just another type of temptation and should be dealt with the same way."

"I just have one other item to cover before we review the program. Generally, when we learn something that changes our lives, we like to share it with other people. As you know, helping others overcome their addiction is one of the 12 steps of 12 step programs. Because of the potential embarrassment that results for people when they admit they are a viewer, we tend to see less sharing of the P.O.P principles.

"I see the lives of many people destroyed because of pornography. I've tried fighting it at the source but to no avail. I believe the pornographer spreaders will only get more aggressive and avoiding pornography will become more and more difficult. So, my focus now is to get the message of this program into as many hands as I can so that lives and relationships can be restored, that love and confidence can replace misery and low self-image.

"Can you think of ways you can share this program with others? I know you have a full-time job and are busy with family and church responsibilities so I'm not asking you to become a full-time teacher. But helping others is an important step for you to keep living a loving life"

"Jason thought for a moment, and then said, "I can think of a few ways to share it. I am one of those people who is deeply embarrassed by my viewing so I don't want to share my story but I can see a few ways to share it in other ways. I feel strongly that this has changed my life. I was headed for a divorce or life of misery and potential loss of job. Now I have hope again. And I want to share it with others who may be suffering like I was.

"Here are some of my thoughts on ways I can share:

1. I can mention it to my church leaders so they can explore the program with you and refer viewer/doers to it. I know many of my leaders in the past had little clue how to help viewer/doers.
2. When I hear men joke around about looking at porn, I know, deep-down, they realize it's wrong and is hurting them. I can mention that porn is a serious problem and I've heard of many men quitting porn through this program. That may be a little embarrassing to me so I'm not sure I'll follow through with it.
3. I can post an anonymous flyer on the bulletin board at work and at church in the hopes that someone may notice it and call you for help.
4. I am planning to get involved on the community pages of your website and sharing my experiences and future learning so that others can learn as well. I'll probably do it anonymously though.
5. I'm sure I'll think of other ways to share as well."

"One of the benefits that comes from sharing and looking for opportunities to share is the additional practice and 'top-of-mind' experience *you* have. Do you remember how becoming a sponsor and helping others is a key step in the 12-step program? Well, it's one of those fundamental truths that helps you more than the person you're helping. So I encourage you to share the program with others and find new and different ways to share it. You will benefit just as much, if not more, that they will.

"You didn't find me by coincidence. I was where you were and was helped by someone else. By helping you, I keep myself humble and assist my own ongoing recovery. I hope you get the chance to do the same."

David stuck out his hand and Jason grabbed it. "Congratulations Jason. You completed the program. As you've followed the steps, raised questions and completed the homework, I've noticed the changes in you. You have the swagger back in your step, so to speak.

"When I saw you after your relapse at the 12-step meeting, you seemed lost with little confidence. Now, you seem like you're not only living a loving life but loving the life you're living. You're realizing some of the positive consequences you identified up front.

"This is the greatest payoff to me, to see you make such positive changes after you had almost given up. To see the light come back into your eyes and to see the hope return is very gratifying. Thanks for sticking with the program, even when parts of it seemed counter-intuitive."

Jason stood and hugged David briefly and said a brief, "Thank you." He was afraid if he said any more that he would cry. His life would be different now.

David handed Jason a few pages and said, "Here is the summary of the program. Please read it as your last homework assignment. I'll keep in touch and expect you to as well. Have fun with your family tonight."

Chapter 17: What about Relapse?

"Hi Jason, it's good to hear from you. I'm glad you decided to call me. I've been thinking about you and your progress with the P.O.P. program. How's it going?"

"Hi David, it's good to hear your voice. You sacrificed a lot for me to help me understand and implement the program. I feel like a new man."

After an awkward few-second pause, David asked, "But?"

"Oh, I'm sorry David. I am doing great. I haven't relapsed or anything but I just can't get one concern out of my mind so I thought I would call and ask your advice. Is now a good time?"

"I consider you a friend Jason so I'm glad you called. I'm honored that you would want to share your concern with me and I'll do whatever I can to help. Oh, and now is a great time for me to talk. What's been bothering you?"

"I've been experiencing some fear the last few days about future relapsing. I know it probably sounds strange, but I have this nagging concern in my mind. "If I can live a life of love for six months, then relapse while working a 12-step program, what makes me think I won't do the same with the P.O.P. program?" I haven't been able to shake the concern so I thought I would give you a call. "

"My guess is that you probably know the answer but sometimes we all just need to talk it through with someone to coax the answer out of our minds and give it some clarity. You also just finished a program that provided some great learning but also contained a lot of new information that is hard to absorb all at once. I hope I can help."

"I hope so too."

"Let me ask a few questions first and then we'll proceed. "What do you feel are the main differences between how your loving life living is going now versus how it went before?"

"I feel a little more relaxed now, especially with the power to choose differently if I want to in the future. "

"Do you really feel you have the power to choose to view and do whenever you want, that your choice to live a loving life is for this instance only?"

"I thought I did but now that you phrase it like that, maybe I wasn't feeling it. Maybe I was feeling like my choice was forever. I can see how that would contribute to my fears of future relapse."

"What about your practice? Have you kept up with your practice schedule?"

"I'm good at the daily practice but I missed the last re-stating of consequences. I was thinking that the consequences were still pretty fresh in my mind so I should be able to skip this time. I am

keeping up with ACV practice though."

"I'm glad to hear you're keeping up with the ACV practice. I hope you're also getting a sense for why I'm asking specific questions. I have found that the P.O.P. program is relapse-free when executed correctly with practice. The practice part of the program used to end after six weeks but we found relapse starting to emerge.

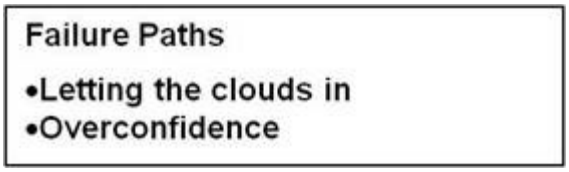
"We figured out that because of the way our minds work practice is an essential part of the program. I believe our minds are created in a way that long-term consequences are in a constant state of fading and that visions are in a constant state of fading. In order to keep the consequences clear of clouds and to keep our visions tangible, real and in the front of mind, not back, we need to regularly rehearse them and review them.

"Life wouldn't be much of a challenge if we were always able to weigh all consequences at their full weights before making decisions. As it is, we overweight the short-term gratification consequences because the longer term consequences become cloudy and receive less and less weight with time.

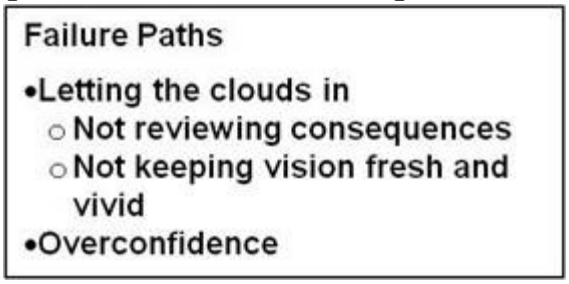
"By regularly reviewing them, we keep the clouds away; they stay clear and vivid and they stay in the forefront of our minds so that we can make a logical, sound choice that is in line with our long-term best interests.

"We find the two most common failure paths are letting the clouds come back and overconfidence, both of which are thwarted with active practice." David asked Jason to imagine the statements being written on the white board.

Jason chuckled. He was already picturing the statements on the white board.



We let the clouds in when we fail to review and rehearse the negative and positive consequences list or fail to keep the vision fresh, vivid and tangible.

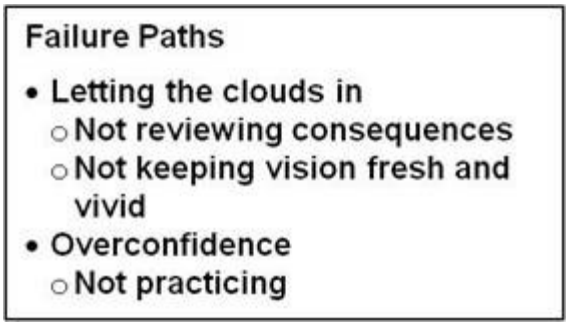


"In fact, review and rehearsing form just part of the keys to staying with the loving life. The other factor is recognizing that choosing is more complicated than just choosing an action. We've seen some relapses occur because people shift from choosing consequences to choosing actions. Your

chances of success go way up when you choose consequences, not just actions. Exercising your freedom to choose in this way keeps the clouds away.

"Many recovering viewers believe that they are healed and no longer have to use the ACV process. When they stop using ACV, they will often encounter a temptation that happens in a different place or different way or comes more strongly than usual. Their overconfidence that led to them abandoning the ACV process with every temptation proves to be their downfall and they relapse.

"The most common consequence of overconfidence is the failure to keep up with the other practice recommendations. When we feel like we're healed, we don't think we need to continue practicing. Can you imagine a world-class athlete saying that he reached perfection so he doesn't need to practice anymore?"



David paused but Jason didn't respond. The answer was obvious and David's point was made. Jason thought that athletes have to constantly practice just to maintain their current skill level and to stay in shape. To improve, they have to step up their practice.

David continued, "As you know, I think the ACV part of the P.O.P. program is the essence of the program and the backbone of living a loving life. But I also think that practice is just as essential to maintaining the living of a loving life.

"We discovered that with deliberately scheduled practice, religiously followed, relapse was avoided.

"Did you put all the practice sessions on your calendar?"

"The practice sessions were kind of complicated with daily, weekly, monthly, etc., so I may have missed some. I can see now that they are vital and will go a long way to helping me rid myself of the concern over future relapse. I'll get them scheduled."

"Great. How do you feel now?"

"I feel much better. My freedom to choose is re-energized and I'll practice tonight to get and keep the clouds away."

"One other thing to keep in mind: Relapse is not a part of the program. If you relapse, that means you aren't following the program, either through choice or neglect. If either of these happen

and you do relapse, stop your spiral as soon as you can by starting the program from the beginning."

Note: *Please refer to* www.poweroverpornography/practice *to review the scheduling of your practice sessions. We recommend everyone participate in the ongoing practice program. Find details at the website.*

Note: *We've discovered that the most effective method of overcoming pornography addiction is the completion of our online course combined with the online plus email reminder practice program. Preliminary results indicate a 90%+ success rate. Success rates drop when the practice program is excluded and drop further when the online course is not completed. We encourage you to enroll and complete the online course and subscribe to the practice program in order to ensure your success at living a loving life. You may find the course at* www.poweroverpornography/course.

Chapter 18: Summary of the Program Steps

Step 1: Commit to finish the program. Commitment has its own power. When you commit yourself in faith, admitting that you can't do it yourself, you unlock the power of commitment to help you overcome the powerful viewing addiction. Commit without surrendering your power to choose.

Step 2: Clarify the negative consequences. Determine the truthful consequences of viewing pornography. Use reliable sources and stories. Narrow the list to the top five consequences that ring most true to you. By deliberately clarifying the consequences before taking action, we increase our chances of choosing wisely.

Step 3: Clarify the positive consequences of living porn-free, or of living a loving life. Narrow this list to the top five positive consequences you most want in your life. When you review your consequences, you'll benefit much more from the positive ones. The more clear, positive and emotion-filled, the better. Remember, you can choose your actions but you can't choose different consequences than the actions dictate.

Step 4: Create your vision using your positive consequences list. Remember, "He who cherishes a beautiful vision, a lofty ideal in his heart will one day realize it." Your vision will provide tremendous power. For your mind to see it clearly your vision needs to be well-defined, vivid and positive. Make it focused on the benefits to you, not others. **K**eep **I**t **S**imple.

Step 5: Acknowledge and Accept all temptations. Temptations come to all and are not bad nor should they cause guilt. Remember Victor Frankl's words, "Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom." Immediately Acknowledge the temptation plainly, directly and specifically.

Step 6: Acknowledge and exercise your power to choose. Choices are for this instance only. You are free to choose differently in every instance. This concept is a key to the program and a key to your power. Choosing vision, positive consequences, benefits and results gives you power. When you tell yourself that you must, have to, better, ought, should or use other "compel" language, you are denying your freedom to choose and lose your power.

Step 7: Use the ACV process to confront and deal with every viewing/doing or related temptation. Write it down and recite it with every temptation without exception.

1. **A**cknowledge and **A**ccept the Temptation in first person: ("I want to view and do")
2. Exercise your freedom to **C**hoose ("I am free to choose and I choose…")
3. Choose your customized, positive vision

Step 8: Embrace anxiety and discomfort. Overcoming a long-held habit like viewing involves some anxiety and discomfort. Recognize that these feelings are natural and part of your beginning to live a loving life. "Feel the fear and do it anyway."

Step 9: Recognize and reject the power-takers, or failure paths: SAPS and doing it for others.

Suppress. When you attempt to suppress the temptation with your own willpower, it will increase in power and refuse to leave.

Avoid. When you attempt to avoid triggers and temptations instead of confronting them directly with the ACV process, the temptation does not go away but increases in power.

Protect. When you rely upon protection, such as computer filters, disconnecting the internet, etc., you have not confronted and dealt with the temptation so it will not go away. **Please use protections for others that may access your electronics.**

Substitute. When you try to substitute another thought or action to replace the temptation, the temptation gains power and comes back strongly because it has not been confronted and dealt with.

Do the program for yourself, not for others. Others will benefit but the power comes from doing it for you.

Step 10: Recognize the lie in rationa"lie"zations. When you provide reasons for your viewing and doing, they are generally not true and not worth it. It's important to recognize them as lies. Refer to the chapter on "Why do we View Pornography?" for detailed examples.

Step 11: Repair the damage. Use affirmations on a daily basis to rapidly repair the damage viewing and doing did to your self-image. Set and achieve worthy goals to get back on track to living a loving life.

Step 12: Repair the relationship. True intimacy is an important part of your relationship with your spouse and is formed over years of trust, respect, kindness and affection. Those not married can still work on the foundations of true intimacy to improve their future relationship. Practice listening, sharing, being dependable, being honest and demonstrating your love. Remember that actions speak louder than words.

Step 13: Practice. Repetition and practice are the keys to mastery. When you're practicing, you're expanding your comfort zone. Practice ACV at least twice per day. Practice Affirmations once per day. Institute scenario practice regularly according to the schedule. Be engaged in the conversation and in the community on a regular basis.

Step 14: Share. Find a way to be the teacher or lead someone to the teachings. The teacher always learns more than the student. Helping another helps you practice and stay engaged. Keep the clouds away

Appendix A: P.O.P. Resources

Free CD of a Brian Brandenburg interview discussing the keys to success using the Power over Pornography program: www.poweroverpornography.com/freecd

Online course: www.poweroverpornography.com/course

Newsletter list. Monthly email newsletter to keep you in the discussion of Power over Pornography and living the life of love. Keeps you updated on the latest research and findings: www.poweroverpornography.com/newsletter

Commitment letter: www.poweroverpornography.com/commitment

Calendar (Personalize Course Schedule): www.poweroverpornography.com/calendar

Consequences research: www.poweroverpornography.com/consequences

Vision Development and Sharing: www.poweroverpornography/vision

Pre-formatted ACV card: www.poweroverpornography.com/ACVcard

Rationalizations use by viewers: www.poweroverpornography/rationaliezations

Help with Affirmations: www.poweroverpornography.com/affirmations

Help with Relationships: www.poweroverpornography.com/relationships

Help with Scenarios for scenario practice: www.poweroverpornography.com/scenarios

Practice program and schedule: www.poweroverpornography.com/practice

Spiritual Principles: www.poweroverpornography.com/spiritualprinciples

Forums: what's working for other P.O.P clients, answers to your questions, getting help if you need it: www.poweroverpornography.com/forums

Articles, including video: www.poweroverpornography.com/articles (This is our blog)

Other resources outside of the P.O.P. family: www.poweroverpornography.com/links

Appendix B: Definitions and Acronyms
In order of appearance

P.O.P.: Power **O**ver **P**ornography. The name of the this program to help you overcome your addiction to pornography and/or masturbation

Viewing (V); The act of viewing pornography in any of its forms

Viewer: Pornography addict, viewer of pornography

Doing (D): The act of masturbating

Doer: Person who masturbates

Living a Loving Life or **Living a Life of Love:** living a life free of pornography viewing and free of masturbation. Overcoming pornography and masturbation addictions/habits results in increased capacity to love and increased happiness derived from close relationships.

Cloudy or **Cloudiness: refers** to long-term consequences being less clear than short-term consequences and how they will become less clear with time unless we deliberately bring them to the front of our minds or, in other words, erase their cloudiness.

Rule of Five: When you select more than five goals, your focus becomes too diffuse to accomplish them. By limiting your goals/lists/ focus to five or fewer items, you increase your chances of success.

MuHa: **Mu**st or **Ha**ve to. The use of this or other compulsory language takes away your freedom to choose. Correct it when you hear yourself say it by shouting out a "Mu-ha-ha-ha laugh.

BOSS: **B**etter, **O**ught, **S**hould, **S**upposed to. More compulsory language. When you use any of these words, you empower them to become your boss instead of taking the power back from them and giving it to you.

ACV: **A**cknowledge and **A**ccept the Temptation, Acknowledge your Freedom to **C**hoose and Choose your **V**ision. This is the essence of **P.O.P.**

SAD: **S**tress, **A**nxiety and **D**iscomfort. When you view and do to escape SAD, SAD becomes stronger and larger. Embrace the SAD you may feel when you start the program and realize that you are changing for the better and enlarging your comfort zone.

SAPS: **S**uppress, **A**void, **P**rotect, **S**ubstitute. These are the tried and true failure paths to overcoming pornography. Whenever you find yourself doing any of the following, it's time to get back on the ACV program. Otherwise you are headed for relapse: **S**uppress the Temptation, **A**void Triggers and Temptations, Rely upon external **P**rotection, **S**ubstitute another thought or action.

RACV: **R**ecognize the temptation, **A**cknowledge and **A**ccept it, **C**hoose your **V**ision. Recognize is added to the ACV process when traveling and in circumstances when new temptations may arise.

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[i] David O. McKay, Conference Report, Apr. 1950, p. 32
[ii] Mark Castelman, Healing hearts and healing minds

[iii] Mark H. Butler, “Is There Hope for a Pornography Addiction?” The Digital Universe, February 7, 2013
[iv] Patrick Carnes, Don’t Call It Love